

## GREEK EDUCATION

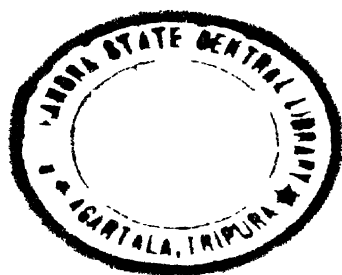
# Greek Education

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450-350B.C.

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# Preface

The subject of this book is Greek Education with special emphasis on its practice at Athens in the period 450-350 B.C. This is perhaps the most important period in the whole history of education. It embraces the thought and practice of virtually all the great pioneers of Classical education, with the exception of Aristotle. And even Aristotle, who is treated only incidentally in this book, commenced his teaching career in this period.

Any study of the period necessitates a brief review of the major educational trends of the previous nine or ten centuries, and this I have endeavoured to provide in the Introduction.

My debt to previous writers is indicated in the Bibliography. It is probably fair to say that there is no really satisfactory and reasonably compact account of the period available. Marrou's treatment is compact enough, but his main emphasis is not on this period. Jaeger offers more a history of culture than of education. The best account is still perhaps Grasberger's, but he is out of date on many points and far from compact. Kenneth Freeman's *Schools of Hellas*, for all its immaturity and for all its faults, still holds the field, despite the lapse of half a century since its first publication.

There are many excellent modern works by Classical scholars on specific aspects of the period but the results of such researches are seldom reflected in the standard educational histories. In general, educationists of today tend to be unequipped with a knowledge of the Classics, and Classical scholars do not address themselves to specifically educational questions. In writing this book I have tried to bridge the gap between the two disciplines and to present an account which will not neglect the recent researches of Classical scholars. Although I have worked from the original sources myself, I have presented my evidence in the form of quotations from the standard or most readily available translations. The few unacknowledged translations are my own.

It is hoped that the book will serve as a text-book for undergraduate students of educational history and educational philosophy, and as background material for students of Ancient History and Greek Philosophy. It may also be of interest to Classical scholars and the cultivated lay reader.

My thanks are due to Dr G. Howie, Professor G. P. Shipp and Professor A. Cambitoglou of Sydney University, and to Mr A. H. Pelham of the New South Wales Education Department for advice and criticism on specific points; to Methuen's adviser for reading the manuscript in the original draft and making suggestions for its revision; and to the staff of Fisher Library for their generous co-operation in providing access to source material. Especial thanks are due to Professor R. Johnson of the Australian National University, himself an expert in the field, for penetrating criticism and helpful advice, especially on the sophists, Plato and Isocrates; and above all to my former teacher Professor A. D. Trendall, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University. It was he who first commended the topic to my attention. During the course of the revision I kept up a continuous correspondence with him, and despite the many calls on his time by virtue of his high office he never flagged in answering my queries on all sections of the work but especially on points of archæological detail. Though I alone am responsible for the defects of this book, I cherish the hope that its merits may prove not unworthy of the ungrudging assistance afforded and the interest shown by these two experienced scholars of the Australian National University.

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*Longueville, N.S.W.*

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# Introduction

## Myth Poetry and Education in Early Greece

### 1 THE NATURE OF MYTH

After centuries of intellectual effort man has forged for himself instruments and methods of thought upon which he can rely for a solution of his problems and for an understanding of the universe around him. The ability to reason, which characterizes modern man, has been achieved only by a slow process of evolution. Each age, receiving from its predecessors its intellectual traditions, has added something of its own or discarded some of what it received in the light of experience, as it has found the old methods and explanations unsatisfactory or inadequate, until eventually it has acquired some knowledge of the bases of thought itself.

Early man had no such advantages. His earliest attempts at thinking took the form of myth. Confronted with the phenomena of nature, his imagination interprets them in the light of his emotions and his needs. He does not understand distinctions between subjective and objective, between animate and inanimate<sup>1</sup> nor between the universal and the particular. He has no method of testing the validity of his interpretations and is satisfied with such 'explanations' as those with which his imagination provides him. He may, for instance, imagine the growth or failure of his crops as due to the will of some living yet unseen agent. Such an agent thus imagined is a god. With

<sup>1</sup> Frankfort, H. *et al.* *Before Philosophy* p. 14.

equal inconsequentiality he imagines that certain actions duly performed will win the favour of, or appease the anger of, the god. These actions are ritual. Associated with the ritual and forming an integral part of the ceremony are words either describing the ritual or the god's attributes, or imploring the god's assistance. These words are myth, and like the ritual they have the practical aim of procuring some advantage for the society that performs the rites.

It is worth while to examine several typical definitions of myth from the recognized authorities. Jane Harrison<sup>1</sup> maintains that myth and ritual are parts of an integral complex of action and speech which arise together with the purpose of exercising some control over nature or the spirits which control natural phenomena. Robertson Smith takes the view that ritual is first in point of time and that myth is invented to explain the ritual. Spence asserts that the myth is prior to the ritual, which arises out of the myth and attempts to influence the god that the myth has created.<sup>2</sup> In his view all early myth arises out of man's wonderings and questionings about the phenomena of nature or about the reason for the existence of everyday customs and habits. The Frankforts, while appearing to give priority to myth, nevertheless emphasize its complex character.<sup>3</sup> Their definition is worth quoting:

Myth is a form of poetry which transcends poetry in that it proclaims a truth; a form of reasoning which transcends reasoning in that it wants to bring about the truth it proclaims: a form of action, of ritual behaviour, which does not find its fulfilment in the act but must proclaim and elaborate a poetic form of truth.<sup>4</sup>

H. J. Rose defines myth as 'the result of the working of naive imagination upon the facts of experience'.<sup>5</sup> The phenomenon of rain, for instance, may be imagined by the myth-maker in the picture of some being pouring water from the sky. When asked

<sup>1</sup> Harrison, Jane, *Mythology* p. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Spence, *Intro. Myth* pp. 34, 64, 101.

<sup>3</sup> Frankfort, H. *et al. Before Philosophy* pp. 15-16.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Rose, *Handbk Gk Myth.* p. 12.

the cause of rain the myth-maker can then reply: 'because Zeus is pouring water from the sky'. His imaginative picture of the phenomenon becomes in an a-logical way an explanation of it. Having thus explained the phenomenon he may then try to work magic to bring about the rain or cause it to stop.

It will be noted that though scholars disagree on the question of the relation between myth and ritual, they do agree in recognizing the close association between the two, their origin in man's experience in and reaction to nature, and the strongly practical aim that the myth-ritual complex has.<sup>1</sup> It is in fact a method of preserving life, and a substitute for science. Such a method, being socially important, must be taught and transmitted and its transmission is an educational function.

## 2 AETIOLOGY AND THEOBIOGRAPHY

Two later developments in mythology are of importance to our inquiry. The first is the fact that in the course of time the ritual associated with a myth may be preserved while the myth itself may be forgotten. The ritual may then generate a secondary myth of an aetiological type, which offers some explanation of the ritual or its occasion, or both. In this case the myth invented is a more deliberate and conscious explanation than the primitive type and demonstrates the use of myth as an instrument of thought – the form in which speculative reasoning is cast. The second is that in the course of development a large number of tales tended to gather round the chief figures of the pantheon. The gods which had arisen originally in response to social necessity are provided with biographies and adventures and develop more of a definite personality.<sup>2</sup> In this process, described by Spence as 'theobiography', human characteristics are projected on to the gods so that the gods tend to take on the most typical or most admired qualities of the society which generated them. The developing tradition of the gods thus tends to represent the ideals and thought patterns of the

<sup>1</sup> Harrison, *Jane*, *Mythology* p. xii.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. xix; Spence *Intro. Myth.* p. 63.

society to which they belong and in their turn to influence the thought and conduct of the members of that society and of its descendants to whom the traditions are handed on. It is at this stage of development that the myths begin to occupy the place that dogma takes in later religious systems.<sup>1</sup> For in early Greek religion there seems to have been no set of official doctrines or ethical instruction maintained by a priest-class. But the conservatism of tradition tended to invest the myths, in which were incorporated their ethical ideals, with a high degree of authority.

### 3 THE SAGA

So far we have been dealing with myth proper, but there is another type of myth, and for our purposes a very important one, termed saga. Whereas myth proper is, at least originally, concerned with speculation about, and attempts to manipulate, natural phenomena, saga is either an attempt to record historical fact or an explanation of some phenomenon based on a real or supposed historical fact.<sup>2</sup> 'A large part of Greek myth is politico-religious history' asserts Robert Graves,<sup>3</sup> quoting as examples the stories of Bellerophon and Perseus, variants of the same legend. According to Graves, Perseus' beheading of Medusa symbolizes the fact that 'the Hellenes overran the goddess' chief shrines, stripped her priestesses of their Gorgon masks, and took possession of the sacred horses', while Bellerophon's slaying of the Lycian Chimæra refers to the fact that 'the Hellenes annulled the ancient Medusan calendar, and replaced it with another'.<sup>4</sup>

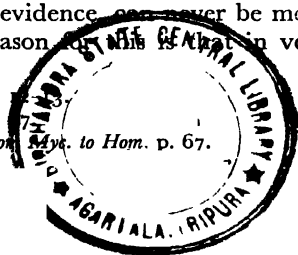
Although specific interpretations of this nature may be open to question, there is a fair measure of agreement amongst scholars that the saga does originate in real or supposed historical events, but any attempt to reconstruct history from the saga, independently of other evidence, can never be more than partially successful. The reason for this is very

<sup>1</sup> Spence, *Intro. Myth.* p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Rose, *Handbk Gk Myth.* pp. 1, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Graves, *Gk Myths* vol. 1, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Graves, *ib.* cf. Webster, *From Myth. to Hom.* p. 67.



early stories there is distortion due to the mythopoeic mode of representation, and in later stories considerable distortion in the process of transmission. A story about a particular event, if such event were of a type likely to recur in different circumstances, tended to become a pattern for similar events occurring at a later date. A stock of pattern events was thus built up, each pattern being constantly modernized as new events were grafted on to the existing pattern story.<sup>1</sup>

One such pattern story must have been the Mycenaean siege story which was adapted time and again to describe later sieges and finally became the basis for the account of the Siege of Troy. This constant process of adaptation of old material together with the formulaic character of oral poetry to be discussed shortly explains why so many Mycenaean memories are preserved in Homer, whose picture of the Mycenaean world, despite anachronisms and distortions, is reasonably accurate. As Whitman says:

Where historical controls exist Homer's picture of the Mycenaean world can be largely verified: his principates are in the right places, his local and personal names, or many of them, appear in the archives of Mycenae, Pylos and Knossos.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, although the principle holds – and it is the principle that is important for the present study – that the saga recorded history,<sup>3</sup> this does not mean that we can reconstruct history from it with any degree of accuracy. The point is well made by Rhys Carpenter:

If he already knows the history from other sources . . . he can discover how events have been distorted . . . , but if, on the contrary, he knows only the epics, he can never hope to change them back into the history out of which they arose.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Webster, *ib.* p. 61 and p. 116 for the Siege story, and p. 120 for stories of raids.

<sup>2</sup> Whitman, *Homer* p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Nilsson, *Homer and Myc.* p. 197.

<sup>4</sup> Carpenter, *Epikale* p. 60; cf. Wade-Gery, *Poet* pp. 35–6.



#### 4 MYTH AS THE VEHICLE OF THOUGHT AND KNOWLEDGE

It seems, then, that in the beginning myth was the result of primitive imaginative thought and became the vehicle for the transmission of ideas on nature, religion and ethics. As these ideas became more rational, the myths themselves, were changed to conform to them, the process culminating in Homer with his unified Olympus<sup>1</sup> and Hesiod with his systematic cosmogony. Parallel with myth proper, though perhaps later in origin, was saga which incorporated the past and present history of the race. The intellectual and moral aspects of early education, therefore, are represented for us in the mythology proper and the historical content in the saga. We shall proceed to argue that both types of mythology were transmitted in the poetry.

#### 5 POETRY BEFORE HOMER

In the earliest times it is likely that the knowledge of mythology was passed on from one generation to another by oral tradition in the ordinary speech of the time. But there came a time when verse was developed as a means of expression – we cannot say when that was, but if we argue from the finished excellence and technical perfection of Homer we must allow many centuries of experimentation and evolution in verse form and composition for that standard to be achieved. We have little evidence of really primitive verse in Greece, but we know that in early Rome, where the development of technique was accelerated by contact with Greece, the earliest verse forms were crude and inartistic and dealt chiefly with religious subjects – hymns, chants and incantations.<sup>2</sup> It is a safe conjecture that the early verse of Greece was equally crude and that its use was to record in a form convenient for the memory not only the tales of the gods and famous men but also the words of hymns and prayers and the details of ritual.

<sup>1</sup> Bowra, *Tradition* p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 69.

The earliest recorded poetry is Homer, but he was not the first of poets. The ancients themselves were aware of this fact.<sup>1</sup> Herodotus' mention of this prevalent opinion and various references in classical literature to Orpheus, Linus and Mousaios as his predecessors are evidence that this belief was widely held.<sup>2</sup> From a study of Homer himself and from other evidence it has become clear that there was a tradition of poetical composition stretching right back to Mycenaean times. This conclusion derives from four main types of evidence, namely

- (a) the nature of oral poetry
- (b) archaeological anachronisms in Homer
- (c) survivals in Homer of older beliefs and customs, and
- (d) Homer's method of narration.

#### (i) 'ORAL POETRY

It has always been an orthodox view that the Homeric poems were composed orally – as long ago as 1795 F. A. Wolf<sup>3</sup> based his separatist theory upon this very fact. But the full implications of the fact of oral composition were not realized before the work of Milman Parry in the late twenties and early thirties of this century.<sup>4</sup> Parry showed that the oral technique was completely different from a written one. Oral poetry is built from formulae – metrical phrases and complete metrical sentences<sup>5</sup>, which are the joint stock-in-trade of all the poets working in the same tradition, committed to and held in the memory to be used on the spur of the moment in the actual course of recitation. The memory is aided by the metre, and everyday language must be raised to a poetical and metrical level before it can become available to the poets.<sup>6</sup> It is, as Carpenter describes it, 'a specialized idiom of communication'. The poet's craft consisted not only in learning the stock of phrases but also in practising the art of adapting them to the

<sup>1</sup> Allen, *Homer* p. 130, quoting Herod. II 53 and Hesiod *Pr.* 193.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.*

<sup>3</sup> cf. Rose, *Handbk Gk Lit.* p. 36.

<sup>4</sup> Parry's theories can conveniently be studied in their most developed form in the work of his disciple A. B. Lord (*The Singer of Tales*).

<sup>5</sup> Carpenter, *Folklore* p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.*

present purpose. 'He may or may not be a good poet; he must be a good craftsman.'<sup>1</sup>

The stock of phrases was gradually added to by generation after generation of poets, until by the time of Homer there were at least 25,000 formulae.<sup>2</sup>

Just as there were traditional formulae, so there were traditional themes, such as the siege theme, which could be adapted to new occasions. Some of the themes and many of the linguistic features found in Homer reach right back to Mycenaean times.<sup>3</sup>

The acceptance of Parry's theory of oral poetry carries with it a recognition of a tradition of epic poetry long before Homer.

## (ii) ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The existence of the poetical tradition can be further inferred from the memories preserved in Homer of material objects, beliefs and customs which were known to have existed in earlier times and not to have existed in Homer's own time. This type of argument is especially cogent inasmuch as the general tone and attitude and the overall material background of the poems are those of Homer's own period.

Examples of material objects which had not existed since the fall of Mycenae are the boar's tusk helmet in Book X of the *Iliad*<sup>4</sup> and the metal-working technique on the Shield of Achilles – a technique which is not later than the fourteenth century.<sup>5</sup> The first of these is accurately described, though the memory of the second is somewhat distorted, Hephaistos making preparations more suitable for working iron.<sup>6</sup>

The catalogue of the Achaeans in Book II of the *Iliad* ignores the Dorians and describes Greece as it must have been in Mycenaean times.<sup>7</sup> Homeric palaces 'correspond to Mycenaean palaces and differ completely in scale from early Greek houses, although they are *megara*'.<sup>8</sup>

In Homer men and gods associate together, but this 'relation-

<sup>1</sup> Page, *Od.* p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> Page, *Il.* p. 223.

<sup>3</sup> Page, *Od.* p. 145.

<sup>4</sup> Page, *Il.* p. 218.

<sup>5</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 289, 111.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* p. 29.

<sup>7</sup> Page, *Il.* p. 120.

<sup>8</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 113.

ship is a thing of the past'.<sup>1</sup> In Mycenaean times the ruler was a god or near god, and for this reason divine and human characters mingle together. The survival of this relationship in Homer is a survival from Mycenaean times.<sup>2</sup> Although chariot tactics are not normally understood in Homer, the heroes using them merely for personal transportation, there are however certain passages where their real use is remembered.<sup>3</sup> Another Mycenaean memory is the luxurious bathing of the heroes by women slaves, Homer using the pre-Greek word *aminthos* for 'bath'.<sup>4</sup>

The usual explanation of these anachronisms is that they were preserved in the formulæ and stock passages of early epic poetry.

### (iii) SURVIVALS OF ANCIENT BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS

Some passages in Homer seem to show traces of old forms of ritual preserved in the verse tradition on which he drew. In the *Nekuia* of the *Odyssey* there is a ritual described which seems to be a vestigial survival from more primitive times.<sup>5</sup> In summoning the dead, Odysseus made offerings of food, drink and blood and promised future sacrifice.

The manner in which Patroklos' body is treated in the *Iliad* also suggests an old sacrificial ritual.<sup>6</sup> Achilles and his men cut off their hair and heaped it upon the corpse. They raised an abundant pyre a hundred feet high, putting the corpse on top. They slaughtered and flayed many sheep and wrapped the corpse in the fat. Jars of honey and oil were set on the pyre; four horses, two dogs and twelve Trojans were thrown on, and the whole pyre was set alight. Then the fire was quenched with wine, and the bones were gathered up and put within a golden urn, and a barrow raised. Then the funeral games were held to commemorate the dead chief.<sup>7</sup>

Now sacrifices to the dead and the sacrifice of human victims are quite out of harmony with the tone and customs of Homeric

<sup>1</sup> *ib.* p. 69.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* p. 114.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* pp. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* pp. 103-4.

<sup>5</sup> Rohde, *Psyche*, pp. 12-13, 29, 78.

<sup>7</sup> Homer, *Il.* XXIII.

society as represented elsewhere in the epics. In Mycenaean times the dead were usually buried, not cremated. The ghost was believed to survive and might return to earth to the scene of its burial and intervene in the affairs of men unless it received honour. This belief was also widely held in historical times and survives in Hesiod,<sup>1</sup> but in the period of which Homer treats – the period between the fall of Mycenae and the dawn of the historical era – these beliefs gave way to the belief that the dead after, and only after, cremation departed for Hades where they neither needed nor demanded reverence or sustenance and took no part in the affairs of men. The two passages referred to above are exceptions to the uniform picture of the dead which Homer elsewhere presents.<sup>2</sup> In the Patroklos passage the two beliefs are confused. On the one hand the rites presuppose his need of refreshment and respect, but he is cremated and goes off to Hades in accordance with the usual custom of Homeric ghosts.<sup>3</sup>

It is evident, therefore, as Rohde says, that these highly elaborate rituals described in the two passages referred to above are survivals in the verse tradition of beliefs and customs existing long before Homer. The fact that they are included amongst the same verse material that provided the basis of the Homeric Epics implies that at the time when they represented genuine contemporary ritual they were also described in verse, and thus became embedded in the verse tradition. This would lend support to our view that verse was early used to preserve the details of ritual. The whole bulk of the Epic tradition with its accounts of the gods in their relations to one another and with men, as well as the accounts of the gods in Hesiod's *Theogony*, are sufficient proof of the use of verse for the recording of mythic facts.

#### (iv) HOMER'S METHOD OF NARRATION

There are in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* a number of passages

<sup>1</sup> Page, *Od.* p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* pp. 21-3; Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 109, cf. pp. 140, 164-5.

<sup>3</sup> Page, *Od.* p. 24.

where we can detect Homer at work changing the tales left him\* by his predecessors. But the original tradition shows through and we are thus able to infer what that tradition was. These so-called expurgations will be discussed later in another connection, but one simple example of the process will be mentioned here. When Odysseus meets Nausikaa we have all the elements of an old folk-tale in which the stranger meets a lovely princess, proves his prowess and wins her for his wife. In Homer the story proceeds for most of its length on these traditional lines, but as Homer's purpose demands that Odysseus return to Penelope, he must needs disappoint his readers of their hopes.<sup>1</sup> Vergil, who drew the elements of his characters and plots from every conceivable source, restored the traditional tale and made Aeneas fall in love with Dido.

Herodotos<sup>2</sup> informs us that there was an account of the rape of Helen in which Paris on his flight is forced by contrary winds to put in at Sidon, where Proteus, disgusted at Paris' conduct, detains Helen with the intention of restoring her to her husband, and sends Paris away. Herodotos<sup>3</sup> argues that Homer knew of this account and reveals that knowledge in two passages in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*,<sup>4</sup> but accepted the account in which Helen went to Troy as being more suited to his plot. Herodotos also mentions that the *Cypria* takes Helen direct to Troy. It is evident from this that Herodotos believed that this episode had been treated by other poets before Homer. It is worth noting that Stesichorus in his *Palinode* adopts the account in which Helen remained in Egypt, and in doing so he may be returning to the pre-Homeric version.<sup>5</sup>

From such instances as these where Homer is convicted of altering the accepted tradition we may infer the existence of a poetical tradition prior to him. But there are passages where

<sup>1</sup> Woodhouse, *Composition* p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> Herod. II. 115; Allen, *Homer* p. 170.

<sup>3</sup> Herod. II. 116.

<sup>4</sup> Homer *Il.* VI. 289 and *Od.* IV. 227.

<sup>5</sup> cf. Carpenter, *Folktales* p. 61: 'Somewhere in the Saga, it would seem, there lurked a memory of a heroic expedition which had had Egypt for its goal.'

Homer himself assumes a knowledge of the tradition in his listeners. He frequently writes allusively, relying on the listeners to understand the references from their knowledge of the tradition. Thus, for example, where Glaucus and Diomedes meet in *Iliad* VI,<sup>1</sup> Diomedes declares that he will not fight with a god, and instances the case of Lykourgos who came to grief through contending against the gods. The parallel would have little point if the readers were not expected to know the case of Lykourgos through their acquaintance with the saga tradition. Similarly, when Glaukos is outlining his pedigree to Diomedes,<sup>2</sup> he refers to events of the saga that happened before the Trojan War. The career of Bellerophon is briefly sketched, as though Homer were refreshing the reader's memory of events that he would have heard about elsewhere.

Gilbert Murray<sup>3</sup> reminds us that both the story of Bellerophon and that of Lykourgos were stated by the scholia to have been related by Eumelos of Corinth in the *Europia*, a part of the *Corinthiaca*. Now Murray accepts the evidence of the scholiast as proof that Eumelos preceded Homer in point of time, but an equally tenable view of this passage (and one which is consistent with other evidence placing Homer somewhere in the eighth century and not the sixth as Murray does) is that both Eumelos and Homer drew upon an older source in the saga material where the Corinthian legend was treated. What is certain is that the stories were in fact treated by some poet before Homer.

In the *Odyssey* the whole field of the Epic Cycle from the *Cypria* to the *Telegonia* is touched upon by Homer, in a manner which assumes a knowledge of the fuller treatment in the saga. Allen<sup>4</sup> gives a list of the topics alluded to. It is clear from this that the stories treated later by the Cyclic poets already existed in the saga tradition before Homer.

The existence of a poetic tradition is further emphasized by the way in which Homer introduces the theme of the *Iliad*.<sup>5</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* VI. 119-43.

<sup>2</sup> Murray, *Epic* p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> Bowra, *Trad.* p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* VI. 145-210.

<sup>4</sup> Allen, *Homer* pp. 72-5.

appeals to the Muse 'to sing of the wrath, *beginning there where first there was strife* and sundering between Agamemnon, King of men, and divine Achilles'.<sup>1</sup> The italicized phrase implies that there was a recognized sequence in the tradition of the Trojan War, and that the poet will take up the story at the point suggested. The reader, thus oriented, will understand exactly where in the sequence the new poem is to begin and will be interested to hear this new treatment of an old theme. Similarly Homer introduces the *Odyssey* with: 'From somewhere amid these tales, O Muse, speak to us also.' Likewise Demodocus, a bard mentioned in the *Odyssey*, 'called upon the god and made minstrelsy, beginning where the Greeks had gone upon their benched ships'.<sup>2</sup>

## 6 POETRY AND HISTORY

The above evidence clearly establishes the existence of a poetical tradition before Homer. The question still remains – what was its subject matter? The bards represented in the *Odyssey* – there are none in the *Iliad* as the warriors left their bards at home – sing of the 'deeds of gods and men'. Demodocus offers a song on the Loves of Ares and Aphrodite,<sup>3</sup> The Wooden Horse, and the Quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles. These last two deal with events which were not included in the *Iliad*, but which were contemporary events in relation to the happenings of the *Iliad*. Similarly in Ithaca Phemius<sup>4</sup> sings of the Return of the Achaians, and when Penelope asks him not to sing this particular song, Telemachus supports the bard because the public likes the *newest* song. Telemachus shows his admiration for Orestes' recent act of matricide by saying it will become 'a theme for bards'.<sup>5</sup> The reason which the Sirens offer Odysseus to tempt him to stop is that they have the *latest* news. So the bard must keep his repertoire up to date, adding new songs as new events occur. When a topic is suggested he is expected to be able to take it up, as we see when Odysseus suggests the topic of the

<sup>1</sup> Trans. Murray in *Epic* p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> *Od.* VIII. 50c; trans. Murray.

<sup>3</sup> *Od.* VIII. 256 seq.

<sup>4</sup> *Od.* I. 325.

<sup>5</sup> *Od.* I. 350-2.



Wooden Horse to Demodocus. But the old tales were not neglected, for Achilles amuses himself singing tales of bygone men, which he had probably learnt from listening to the bards, or as part of his education.

Accuracy of narration is much admired. Odysseus compliments Demodocus because he has told his tale correctly.<sup>1</sup> When Odysseus hears an account of events in which he himself took part he praises the accuracy of the bard.

The evidence from Homer, therefore, indicates that the bards were expected to know all the events of past and contemporary history and to be able to relate them accurately and in correct order when called upon. They were, in fact, the historians of their time, having the double function of recording and teaching history. The stories they related were regarded as genuine history and the heroes of the saga, which we have distinguished from myth proper, were therefore men, not gods.<sup>2</sup>

Further important evidence to support this view is adduced by Allen,<sup>3</sup> and it is worth while to give here a summary of his argument.

An account of the saga material is preserved in Dictys of Crete.<sup>4</sup> Though Dictys, to suit the tastes of a different age, eliminates the divine element and introduces a romantic feminine interest, he does seem to follow fairly closely the actual events of the Epic tradition as represented in the Epic Cycle.<sup>5</sup> But when dealing with the particular events described in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* Dictys shows remarkable variations from Homer's account. For example, Dictys relates all the events of the *Odyssey* in the third person and in consecutive order. Homer puts Books IX to XII into the first person, reserving for these books the events leading up to the arrival at Phacacia. Homer's method had distinct artistic and dramatic advantages which might prompt him to re-arrange the material and it is therefore certain that it was Homer who re-arranged the order of relation rather than Dictys. Dictys then tells the whole Trojan

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* VIII. 489-91.

<sup>2</sup> See Note I, p. 316 below.

<sup>3</sup> Allen, *Homer* p. 150 seq.

<sup>4</sup> See Note II, p. 316 below.

<sup>5</sup> Proclus is our chief authority for this.

Cycle, following in the main the Epic Cycle, but unlike it, including the Wrath and the Return of Odysseus. From the fact that he gives a different account of these stories from Homer, but agrees with the Cycle in the other stories, Allen argues that both the Cycle and Dictys are drawing upon the same original material, which Homer varied. The two episodes treated by Homer are not represented in extant epos simply because Homer's reputation defied competition by the Cyclic poets. But the original epic treatment of them, which provided the basis of Homer's work, survives in Dictys. This original, Allen suggests, was a verse chronicle descending through successive generations of poets from the actual period, and possessing some genuine historical value. In further support of this view Allen quotes many references to the Trojan War not found in Homer or the Cycle.

It is obvious that even in these scanty quotations we have a good deal of tradition that cannot be found in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and which cannot have been derived from the Cycle.<sup>1</sup>

His conclusion is worth quoting:

The aristocratic, quarrels, deaths, raids etc. whether as told by Homer or by Dictys imply something of the nature of continuous history. This, I suggest, – considering on the one hand the themes sung by bards in the *Odyssey*, the wide belief that the Trojan War had been composed in verse by poets earlier than Homer, the considerable amount of non-Homeric information on the Trojan War and the heroic age extant in logographi and again the survival of two formal accounts of the war in complete variance with Homer, was a verse chronicle coming down from the actual period, and which Homer and his disciples alike used, and which eventually produced the chronicle of Dictys.<sup>2</sup>

Allen, of course, had no knowledge of the decipherment of Linear B and the consequent pushing of the Greek tradition right back to Mycenae, but his general theory of an epic tradition reaching back for many centuries beyond Homer anticipates

<sup>1</sup> Allen, *Homer* p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> ib. p. 175.

many of the conclusions set in motion by Parry's theory of oral poetry.

The present argument may be summarized thus:

- (a) There was a tradition of epic poetry before Homer, of whose antiquity we can see traces in Homer himself.
- (b) Dictys and the Cycle represent this original tradition more accurately than Homer.
- (c) The epic tradition had a genuinely historical foundation which, though it set great store by accuracy of narration, became distorted by the passage of time.
- (d) The epic heroes are glorified men of original historical significance, and not faded gods.

The significance of the above discussion for education may be summed up by saying that primitive education found its ideals and its content in the mythology and its form or method of transmission in the poetry.

## 7 MYTH AND POETRY AS PROJECTIONS OF SOCIAL IDEALS

An important point that emerges from the above is that an essential part of the subject-matter of education was the history of the great deeds of men. The genuine history that formed the basis of the tales became distorted, the distortion depending on the social and moral background of the particular times through which the tradition passed. In the process of distortion the ideals and attitudes of the time tended to be projected on to the heroes of the saga, who were, in a sense, viewed as pattern lives setting the standards of virtue which the community acknowledged and to which they would wish their children to conform. Thus the saga not only represented the standards of virtue but also by its influence tended to inculcate these standards into rising generations and thus contribute to the evolution of moral standards. Its influence was both conservative and progressive – conservative inasmuch as the older standards tended to become embedded in the formulæ of the epics, and progressive in the sense that newly evolving standards

also found their place, in some cases displacing, in others co-existing with, the old. The educators of those days were therefore the poets who in the light of contemporary conditions interpreted the saga as they found it, made it available throughout the society by their recitations, and enlarged and improved it by recording new events as they occurred. In all this they were performing a typically educational function. What Rohde says of the Homeric world may with equal truth be applied to the generations that preceded him:

If anyone did possess a monopoly of teaching it was, in this age when all the highest faculties of the spirit found their expression in poetry, the poet and the singer.<sup>1</sup>

## 8 MYCENAEAN POETRY

### (i) MYCENAEAN POETRY IS GREEK POETRY

Allen had pushed Greek poetry back as far as the Trojan War; Murray<sup>2</sup> had assumed that the Greek poetic tradition stretched back to Mycenae; and Nilsson<sup>3</sup> had detected many Mycenaean elements in Homer. But with the decipherment of Linear B by Michael Ventris in 1953<sup>4</sup> and the revelation that the Pylos tablets were written in a form of Greek which was the ancestor of epic Greek, it was established beyond all doubt that the Mycenaeans spoke Greek and that their poetry was Greek. It is not probable that Greek poetry began with Mycenae – there must have been an even earlier tradition – but our evidence cannot take us any further back.

### (ii) TYPES OF POETRY

Mycenaean poets [says Webster<sup>5</sup>] sang in double short rhythm, using formulae, refrains and typical scenes, of their kings in peace and war, of their houses, furniture and beautiful objects and of their fighting and their armour.

<sup>1</sup> Rohde, *Psyche* p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Murray, *Epic*, *passim*; cf. Myres, *Homer* p. 208.

<sup>3</sup> Nilsson, *Homer and Myc.*, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Ventris and Chadwick, *Documents*; Chadwick, *Decipherment* p. 73.

<sup>5</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 113.

There were three main kinds of poetry which Webster thus describes:

... cult songs, songs about the great kings of the past sung on their anniversaries, and songs sung at banquets, which dealt with the international present but laid a strong emphasis on the exploits of the present local king . . . The first two kinds were local and tended to remain fixed, because they were sung on local occasions; they may have been recorded. The third kind was always improvised for the particular occasion.<sup>1</sup>

The three kinds were composed in the Court style and none of the poems was of any great length.<sup>2</sup>

For the educator the important thing is that the poetry dealt with historical fact and that the poets preserved and passed on the continuing record of great exploits. Because old stories were constantly adapted to new occasions and because material equipment tended to be brought up to date, history became distorted but the process of composition was rendered easier. For example, the Siege story of the *Iliad* is a very old story probably taken over by the Mycenaeans from the Minoans<sup>3</sup> and constantly adapted to each new siege undertaken by Mycenaean kings. The poet would use the old framework for the new story, but he would change the names, modernize the equipment and add new exploits.<sup>4</sup>

### (iii) THE USE OF FORMULAE

Just as pattern scenes were constantly repeated in new situations so pattern formulae of expression were constantly re-worked and re-used. Milman Parry has used the formula technique to argue that early poetry was oral, not written. But for purely Mycenaean times we are not forced by the evidence to accept this as fact, for writing existed and the use of formulae was dictated by the Court style.<sup>5</sup> The poets do not, initially, invent the formulae, but they are useful for the purposes of improvisation and welcome to the audience.<sup>6</sup> Their origin lies in titles of gods and men, in royal correspondence and operation

<sup>1</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* p. 130.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* pp. 70-1.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 133.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* p. 133.

orders and in the refrains of cult hymns<sup>1</sup> as well as in the fixed formulæ of the courtesies of courtly intercourse.<sup>2</sup> The conservatism of ritual and myth likewise tended to petrify certain formulæ. The formulæ were, then, characteristic of Mycenaean as of Homeric poetry, but in the former case they were dictated by other considerations than the convenience of the poet, while in the latter case they were essential to the developed technique of oral poetry.

#### (iv) CATALOGUE POETRY

We have noted that at a very early stage poetry was adapted to the purposes of mythology and history. This usage was but one aspect of the general utilitarian nature of early poetry, which is likewise revealed in various elements of Homer and the Hesiodic corpus. Just as poetry was the most convenient vehicle for the preservation of ritual, so it was used to give a permanent form to matters of a more secular nature. The earliest specimens of this type are almost certainly the catalogues found embedded in Homer and Hesiod.<sup>3</sup> We cannot be certain of the antiquity of all the Homeric and Hesiodic catalogues but two at least can be traced back to Mycenæ.

The most famous catalogue of all is the catalogue of ships in *Iliad* II. In the Achaean catalogue a list of the leaders of the contingents is given with some description of the district from which they came. Gilbert Murray points out<sup>4</sup> that there is a catalogue of the Achæans in Euripides' *Iphigeneia at Aulis* (ll. 164-302) which is very much shorter than the Homeric one. The arrangement and order of Euripides' catalogue is different though it contains fundamentally the same facts, and Murray argues that Euripides took it over from some other source. Now Murray, who presents quite a different view of the relationship of the *Cycle* and Homer from the one which is assumed in this chapter, believes that source to be the *Cypria*. But most modern writers believe the older source to be the common saga tradition on which both Homer and the *Cypria* drew.

<sup>1</sup> *ib. From Myc. to Hom.* p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> See Note III, p. 316 below.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 70.

<sup>4</sup> Murray, *Epic*, note to p. 179.

Bowra makes the point<sup>1</sup> that the Achaean and Trojan catalogues form complete poems in themselves and must have so existed in the epic tradition. Such poems had as their original aim only the recording of facts for utilitarian and historical purposes. Wade-Gery posits an Aulis poem of a muster at Aulis when the Greek force sailed for Troy.<sup>2</sup> Wade-Gery's Aulis poem reveals Mycenaean knowledge,<sup>3</sup> which was part of the rhapsodes' tradition.<sup>4</sup> This brings his view into line with the views of Page and Webster. Page asserts that the catalogue was a muster list of Mycenaean origin,<sup>5</sup> and that it survived independently of the poetic tradition which culminated in the *Iliad*, but was incorporated at a late stage of the development of the *Iliad* story. Page is committed to a theory of multiple authorship of the *Iliad* and of a Boeotian origin of catalogue poetry in general.<sup>6</sup> This view he supports by reference to the remnant of a Boeotian catalogue in *Odyssey* XI and to the catalogues of Hesiod.<sup>7</sup> He also believes that the streams of epic divided at an earlier stage than is generally supposed and that catalogue poetry in general is 'un-Homeric'. This is just another way of asserting that the catalogue stream separated off from the Homeric stream at an early date, but it does not deny the antiquity of catalogue poetry. This early separation of the two streams is not supported by Webster, who places the final divergence between the Ionian and the mainland streams in the ninth century,<sup>8</sup> nor by Whitman, who claims that the epic survived at Athens until towards the end of the Dark Ages, when it was transplanted to Ionia.<sup>9</sup> But most scholars agree that the Catalogue of Ships derives from a Mycenaean catalogue, especially since there are many similarities in the Catalogue to names found on the Pylos tablets.

Bowra's view of the separate existence of the Achaean and Trojan catalogues is further emphasized by the irrelevance of

<sup>1</sup> Bowra, *Trad.* p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> Page, *Il.* p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> Page, *Il.* p. 152; cf. Page, *Od.* p. 156.

<sup>5</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 178.

<sup>6</sup> Whitman, *Homer* pp. 50. 58.

<sup>7</sup> Wade-Gery, *Poet* p. 53.

<sup>8</sup> Wade-Gery, *Poet* p. 55.

<sup>9</sup> Page, *Od.* p. 36.

some of the facts in the Catalogues to the events of the *Iliad*, especially the mention of Protesilaus and Philoctetes who play no part in the *Iliad* and whose mention is awkwardly excused by Homer. The inclusion in the *Iliad* of the Achaean catalogue is partly explained by the fact that it was regarded as authentic history by Homer's audience and was expected in any account of the War, even though it fits better a poem dealing with the outset of an expedition and not the tenth year of a war. Bowra also suggests that many of the audience would be able to claim ancestors in the lists of captains and so Homer includes the full catalogue, even enlarged by post-Mycenaean additions to pander to the growing pride the aristocracy took in pedigrees.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear, then, that we have in the Catalogue a list compiled originally for practical purposes and in a form most suitable for its preservation.

Another very famous catalogue is in the *Nekuia* of the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus, after performing the prescribed ritual, summons up the ghosts of famous women of the past, the wives and daughters of heroes: Tyro, wife of Cretheus, son of Aeolus, who loved the river Enipeus, in whose guise Poseidon himself lay with her and begat goodly children; Antiope who boasted that she lay even in the embraces of Zeus himself; Alcmena who bare Heracles to Zeus, and Megara, wife of Heracles; then Epicasta and Chloris and Leda; and Iphimedea who lay with Poseidon and many others. The two chief qualities in women that were most admired were beauty and fertility, and the greatest proof of the possession of these qualities was to be singled out as worthy of a god's amorous favours, a fact which is suitably stressed in the catalogue. Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women*, most of whom also enjoyed the embraces of gods, is obviously in the same tradition. Page argues direct imitation by Homer to explain the similarity, while Webster argues for a common source in pre-migration poetry.<sup>2</sup> Once again the Pylos tablets show that Catalogues of Women derive ultimately from Mycenaean times.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* pp. 163-4.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 178.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 119.



The catalogue of Zeus' love affairs in *Iliad* XIV (ll. 315-27) belongs to the same type of poetry. Bowra<sup>1</sup> suggests that it was originally an inventory compiled for the use of devout worshippers, but adapted by Homer to produce a comic effect, thereby turning an old form to a new use. The list of nymphs in *Iliad* XVIII (ll. 39-48) seems to be inserted for the sheer melody of the names and Bowra thinks it is an invention of Homer.<sup>2</sup> A similar, but more extensive list occurs in Hesiod's *Theogony* (ll. 260-4), and it is possible that both derive from some older source. In any case, it is composed in the true catalogue style.

In the song of Demodocus on the Wooden Horse there is a hint of a catalogue of the men inside it:

And he sang how the sons of the Achaians poured forth from the horse and left the hollow lair and sacked the burg. And he sang how and where each man wasted the town and of Odysseus, how he went to the house of Deiphobus with god-like Menelaus.<sup>3</sup>

Homer gives no list of names, but implies that the bard does. It is possible that the incident of the Horse was a late addition to the saga and that no genuine list existed of the warriors' names. Certainly the tradition was indefinite enough for Stesichorus to increase the number to a hundred.<sup>4</sup>

## 9 CHANGES IN POST-MYCENAEAN POETRY

### (i) EFFECTS OF THE COLLAPSE

Troy was sacked in 1230 B.C. Pylos fell in 1200 and Mycenae in 1100.<sup>5</sup> Pockets of Mycenaean culture hung on in various places for varying lengths of time, but in general the Mycenaean world was in ruins and effective communication destroyed. The

<sup>1</sup> Bowra, *Trad.* p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> *Od.* VIII. 514-18; Trans. Lang. (Mod. Lib. p. 123).

<sup>4</sup> Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry* p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 153.

period from 1100 to 800 is the period of the great migrations. Memories of Mycenae survived in the minds of poets, who sought to preserve their 'common Mycenaean past' which 'was a unifying factor in their existence, however much city squabbled with city'.<sup>1</sup>

Poetry showed the effect of all this in its new emphasis on the past. Current events were no longer recorded in the song tradition, which now embodied only ancient, no longer current, history. Troy was the last current event to be included in the saga. If courts survived, as Page says, poets would still have performed for these courts. If, as Webster suggests, the social structure was oligarchical, then the poets would have performed at noblemen's houses. In either case the poems would still, as in the past, have been short. It was not until towards the end of the period that the great festivals came into being and made possible a wider and more continuous audience which led to the long songs of Homer with their grand scale and artistically unified composition. This probably required relays of bards for uninterrupted performance and a written technique for the common text.

In Mycenaean times a man's social position at a homogeneous court would be readily recognized, his pedigree would be well known and need no special advertisement. But where the nobility was a mixed one assembled from many parts of Greece a man's social position would be less well defined and his ancestry obscured. Both individual and group pride in their Mycenaean heritage became potent factors in the society of the Dark Ages. These are reflected in the increasing importance of poetry about the past, and of the genealogical type of catalogue poetry. Some of the expansions of the genealogies in the Catalogue of Ships date from this period. Catalogue poetry in general reached a higher level of development especially in the dark period on the mainland before the final separation of the two main streams, one of which led to Hesiod, the other to Homer.<sup>2</sup>

One further reason for the emphasis on catalogue poetry is

<sup>1</sup> *ib.* pp. 153-4.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 178.

that whereas in Mycenæan times important facts could readily be recorded, the use of writing in the Dark Ages, if it existed, would certainly have been less widespread, with the result that poetry became more emphatically the best method of preserving facts. The majority of the geographical lists and the genealogies found in the epic tradition may well date from this pre-migration period.

## (ii) GEOGRAPHICAL AND OTHER CATALOGUES

The use of the catalogue form to record geographical facts is instanced in *Iliad* XII, where Homer, in recounting the ultimate destruction of the Greek wall, gives a list of rivers:

then verily did Poscidon and Apollo take counsel to wash away the wall, bringing in the might of the rivers, of all that flow from the hills of Ida to the sea. Rhesos there was, and Hippiasos and Karesos, and Rhodios, Grenikos, and Aisepos, and goodly Skamandros, and Simoeis, whereby many shields and helms fell in the dust, and the generations of men half-divine.<sup>1</sup>

A similar, though more extensive, list occurs in Hesiod's *Theogony* (340 ff.):

Tethys bare to Okeanos whirling streams, Neilos and Alpheios and deep eddying Eridanos, Strymon and Maiandros and fair-flowing Istros and Phasis and Rhesos and Acheloios that runs in silver eddies, and Nessos and Rhodios and Haliakmon, and Heptaporos and Grenikos, Aisepos and god-like Simoeis and Peneios and Hermos and broad flowing Kaikos and dark Sangarios, and Ladon and Parthenios and Euenos and Adriskos and god-like Skamandros.

It is obvious that the two catalogues are fundamentally the same. It is commonly argued that in Homer it is a late insertion from Hesiod; but since the theory of a common stock of epic material is now generally accepted, it is no longer fashionable to argue direct imitation in the face of common material. The catalogue may well be 'un-Homeric', but this does not prove

<sup>1</sup> Lines 17-23; trans. Lang, *Mod. Lib. ed.* p. 211.

that it comes direct from Hesiod, for it could just as easily have come across from the mainland stream before the time of Hesiod. In either case it is likely to be a document of some antiquity, and to illustrate the use of poetry for the preservation of geographical material.

The Greeks of epic times set great store by their personal honour. Such honour could only be won by feats of courage or strength in war. The reward for their courage would come when their feats were recorded by the bards and sung before their fellows. The records of their exploits survive in the form of *aristeiae* and *androktasiae*, of which the best known are the accounts of the feats of Diomedes in Book V of the *Iliad*, of Patroklos in Book XVI, and of Achilles in Book XX. Such accounts would serve as patterns of achievement to rising generations.

Another common type of list is the genealogy. In an age when pride of birth was so prominent, it was but natural that noblemen should wish to have their descent recorded in a permanent form and in such a way as to reduce the possibility of dispute. It was natural that the poets should perform this function. There are many such genealogies preserved in Homer and Hesiod, of which the most famous are the descent of Agamemnon in *Iliad* II (101-), Aeneas' descent from Zeus in *Iliad* XX (215-), and the account of how Glaucus traces his ancestry back to Sisyphus the son of Aeolus in Book VI. The simplest list is that of Agamemnon's descent, but even here each king's most famous characteristic is mentioned - Pelops, the charioteer, Atreus, shepherd of the host, and so forth.<sup>1</sup> Aeneas' account is more prolix and the story of Dardanus' swift three thousand mares is added at the mention of Dardanus' name. Glaucus treats us to a rather long account of his ancestor's deeds. But in all three lists we see, by the descriptions, the pride of race that desires recognition of its noble birth. The genealogical form was to have a long history in Greek and Latin

<sup>1</sup> These are probably significant epithets, but Whitman (*Homer*, p. 113) warns us that epithets frequently became attached to heroes not because of qualities inherent in the heroes, but as a result of purely metrical necessities.

literature, and to serve many purposes ranging from the professional flattery of Pindar to the political and even humorous uses to which Horace applied it, but for our present purpose the most significant development was Hesiod's use of the genealogical form as a framework for speculative philosophy.

### (iii) NEW METHODS OF ORGANIZING INFORMATION

We have already mentioned the fact that the genealogy in its developed form may have been an invention of the Dark Ages in response to the growing pride of the new aristocracies rising to power in the new cities.<sup>1</sup> This was one aspect of the pre-Homeric poetic development which consisted in the devising of new and improved techniques for the recording of information. Old and simpler lists are embroidered and turned to new account. The muster lists of feudal captains become a list of the Suitors of Helen, an ingenious device to explain the compulsion of the captains to join the expedition, since feudal compulsions would not have been readily understood in the Dark Ages. The list of Pylian heroines is similarly embroidered and enlarged.

One method of organizing the material is to divide it up into sections having a common introductory formula, which may indicate wooing, suffering (a consolation poem) or similar experience; or the introductory formula may be simply a grammatical form like the Hesiodic 'and such as . . .'.<sup>2</sup> Webster asserts that these lists have a mnemonic quality which would fit in well with oral poetry, but would also be suitable for the succinct recording of information, if writing were used.<sup>3</sup> In either event the educational purpose served by the catalogue form is obvious. Hesiod makes abundant use of the method for succinct recording of lists of practical instructions to farmers, tabus and observances necessary for success, and of lists of moral maxims.

<sup>1</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 185.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* pp. 186.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 186.

## 10 THE USE OF WRITING

The question of the existence and diffusion of the art of writing in the period from Mycenae to Homer must now be faced. Two facts and one widely held assumption must form the basis of the evidence.

The first fact is that the decipherment of Linear B proves that the Mycenaeans were Greeks and that they knew the art of writing.

The second fact, which emerges from Milman Parry's work, is that the poetry which preceded Homer was based on an oral technique, composed in the mind and held in the memory by the medium of a large, common stock of traditional formulae and episodes. This may not apply so much to the early Mycenaean period, if we accept Webster's view that the formulae were originally dictated by court formalities and not by the conveniences of poetic composition.<sup>1</sup> And while few would doubt Parry's thesis of oral composition, it is still not impossible that some or all of the poetry was subsequently recorded.

The assumption mentioned above is that works of the length and unity of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, with their detailed plans and patterns, despite their essentially oral technique, could not have been composed, much less transmitted, without the aid of writing. But these works were composed in the age of alphabetic writing, which is usually dated somewhere between 900 and 800 B.C. There is thus the period from about 1500 to 1100 B.C. when writing is known to have existed, and the period from about 1100 to 900 B.C. during which its existence is uncertain.

The Mycenaean writings that have survived are all on clay tablets and sealings and contain only lists of commodities and personnel.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore possible that writing was exclusively a palace art and not used for other purposes such as for literature. The following summary of the evidence is largely based on Ventris and Chadwick.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See also p. 34 above.

<sup>2</sup> Ventris, *Documents* p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* pp. 109-10.

1. Tablets have been found in houses as well as palaces, a fact which would suggest a wider diffusion, but the houses may have been appendages of the royal administration.
2. The inscriptions on stirrup-jars would suggest that people outside the upper and middle classes could read and write, but the number of stirrup-jars is very small, and there are no surviving examples of the use of the script on wall paintings or monumental inscriptions.
3. Handwriting analysis reveals as many as thirty different hands in each of the Pylos and Knossos sets of inscriptions; since all the tablets within each set were written in the same year this proves considerable scribal activity, but does not establish the use of writing outside the palaces.<sup>1</sup>
4. The shape of Linear A and Linear B suggests that they were not designed primarily for scratching on clay but rather for writing in ink on skins or papyrus. However, there is an absence of ink-pots, styluses and pens from the archaeological record. This may be due to the accident of preservation, the palace records being entered on clay to ensure against vermin and decay. The tablets at Knossos and Pylos were preserved by being baked in the fires that destroyed the palaces. Other records, whether written on clay or papyrus and perhaps even containing poetic texts, may have been stored in different parts of the palaces. If the clay texts escaped the fire they would not have been preserved by baking. Texts on skin or papyrus would scarcely have survived the process of decay.<sup>2</sup>

The evidence for widespread literacy and general use of writing is inconclusive, the most likely probability being that writing was a specialized craft and not universally understood. This does not mean that it could not have been used for literary texts, but only that such texts would not have been published for reading purposes. There is nothing inherently improbable in the theory that such texts were recorded, though there is no

<sup>1</sup> cf. Chadwick, *Deciph.* p. 127-9.

<sup>2</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 23; Chadwick, *Deciph.* p. 130.

real evidence either way. We can only say with Webster that 'the Mycenaeans had an adequate script for recording poetry, if they needed it'.<sup>1</sup>

No Mycenaean word for *scribe* survives and it could be that writing was not highly regarded<sup>2</sup> or, and this is more likely, that some craft-name such as 'herald' covered this activity.<sup>3</sup> Writing must have been a traditional craft, but whether there were highly developed scribal schools is uncertain.<sup>4</sup> The similarities between the tablets from Knossos, Pylos and Mycenae seem however to suggest 'that writing was the preserve of specialists trained in a rigidly conservative scribal school'.<sup>5</sup>

We have already mentioned Parry's theory of oral formulaic poetry and Webster's view that the formulae were originally dictated by court formalities and not by the oral technique. Although the formula method rendered possible the later oral technique, it does not in itself disprove the use of writing for poetical purposes in Mycenaean times. For the Dark Ages we can only conjecture on the use or disuse of writing.

If we make the reasonable assumption that scribes and poets belonged to distinct and separate crafts, it is possible that the poet either composed orally and then dictated his song to a scribe, or composed as he dictated. The reciter, who was most probably also a poet, would learn his song or refresh his memory of it by having the scribe read the text to him. We have, for Mycenaean times, no evidence for this team of poet-scribe-reciter, since no literary texts are extant, but there are analogies from Eastern poetry to support its likelihood.<sup>6</sup> Webster asserts that this likelihood is supported by the fact that

the Court style was convenient both for slow dictation into and for recitation from a difficult script such as Linear B (if it was used for poetry, and we have no evidence either way) . . . It was also convenient, as the analogy of later poetry shows, for oral poetry.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 23; Chadwick, *Deciph.* pp. 126-7.

<sup>4</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Ventris, *Documents* p. 110.

<sup>6</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 77.

<sup>7</sup> *ib.* p. 287.



Webster goes on to suggest that recited and oral poetry, though they co-existed, were different in kind. The text of religious poetry, normally sung by choirs, must have been fixed and was therefore probably recorded. The poetry of solo singers at banquets was oral poetry, adapted to the needs of the particular occasion.<sup>1</sup>

Though many reputable scholars now believe that Homer knew and used the art of writing in composing his epics, he never, except in the Bellerophon passage, mentions writing. None of the heroes understand writing. When they cast lots to fight Hector, each man makes a mark on his own lot, and cannot decipher the marks of the others. There was therefore no universal common system of writing. However, Homer does mention writing in the story of Bellerophon. In sending him to the kingdom of Lycia Proetus 'gave him baleful symbols, having written much to destroy life'.<sup>2</sup> There is something cryptic about this and the conclusion that Bowra draws is that writing existed but that the ordinary man did not understand or know of it.<sup>3</sup> But the poet may have 'learned it as a secret of his craft and have been careful not to disclose the mystery to his audience'.<sup>4</sup> Murray reminds us that books, even in later times, were an aid to the author in reciting, not for private reading.<sup>5</sup> The poet, who had a sort of monopoly of the traditions, might write them down so that he could refresh his memory on forgotten details. Murray also suggests that the phrase 'to consult the Muses' meant that the poet retired secretly to his room and consulted his rolls behind closed doors. Hesiod probably called the Muses 'daughters of memory' with the same implication.

Now if Webster's suggestion of a team of scribe-poet-reciter is correct for Mycenaean times and if Bowra's and Murray's guesses concerning more restricted literacy in later times are correct, it is possible that in the Dark Ages the scribe class disappeared and their functions were taken over by the poets. Certainly if Bowra's theory of the secret nature of writing is correct a guild of poets might easily enough preserve the

<sup>1</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 287.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.*

<sup>2</sup> Trans. Bowra, *Trad.* p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.*

<sup>5</sup> Murray, *Epic* pp. 95-6.

secret, for they could justify their existence as a guild by their oral and public performances of poetry, whereas a guild of scribes could not exist as a guild and at the same time keep from the public a knowledge of the existence of writing, unless they combined their speciality with some other legitimate social service such as heraldry.

## 11 THE TRAINING OF POETS

So far the poets have been revealed as 'educators' in the sense that they kept alive a large body of traditional knowledge and in their work exerted a strong educational influence in moulding character and ideas. But to what extent can we call them 'teachers' in the narrower sense of giving specific instruction to pupils? Verse composition is not something that anyone can do. There are a specialized vocabulary, a common stock of thousands of poetic formulae to be learnt and practised, strict metrical rules to be observed, techniques in the arrangement of subject matter and many other tricks and trade secrets, including possibly the art of writing that could only be acquired through some method of direct instruction. The ultimate result of all these accumulated methods and devices was the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Now the *Iliad*, as Bowra remarks,

implies a long history before itself and a long series of poems written in much the same style. Only a guild with strict rules and jealously held secrets could have maintained a style so homogeneous through so many years.<sup>1</sup>

So it seems that there were techniques and secrets to be mastered by young poets, and such knowledge could only be acquired through deliberate instruction. A guild system, such as Bowra suggests most surely provided the machinery for such instruction.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bowra, *Trad.* p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Whitman (*Homer*, p. 58), while recognizing the necessity 'of a continuous tradition of bard instructing bard in formulaic techniques', seems to deny the existence of guilds prior to the formation of the guild of the Homeridae, which he assigns to Homer's own time. When he says that oral

## 12 TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION

There is abundant evidence in Homer for the existence of a large body of specialized technical knowledge in such fields as carpentry, metallurgy, and agriculture. Thus Phereclus is a skilled carpenter, and he was taught his skill by Athene herself.<sup>1</sup> Hephaistos is the metal-worker par excellence, but in the most famous product of his factory – the Shield of Achilles – we have an article the description of which testifies to the existence of considerable metallurgical knowledge among the artisans of early epic times, knowledge which indeed had been largely lost in Homer's own time. The acquisition of such knowledge and skill presupposes both instruction in the secrets and practice in the materials of the trade and probably some sort of apprenticeship system for the learners.

But the occupation which, apart from that of the poet, was held in highest esteem was that of the physician. 'A physician', says Idomeneus, 'is worth many ordinary men.'<sup>2</sup> The physicians mentioned by Homer were Podalcirios and Machaon. In *Iliad* IV (l. 219) we learn that Machaon used drugs 'such as Cheiron of his good will had imparted to his sire'. It is implied that Asclepius taught his son Machaon the art of medicine, though the ultimate source of medical knowledge was the centaur Cheiron. This passing on of specialist knowledge from father to son may have been the first step in the formation of a guild. But at any rate there were secrets and skills to be acquired through teaching, for though Patroklos may render Eurypylos first aid, he only does so in the absence of the doctor.<sup>3</sup>

poets do not normally form guilds (p. 81) he is evidently arguing from the analogy of the Yugoslav oral poets. But while a study of these poets has thrown much light on Greek epic the analogy must not be pressed too closely. Homeric epic, for one thing, uses a much more difficult metre, requiring more rigid formulae and more of them. This alone would render more systematic instruction necessary.

<sup>1</sup> Bowra, *Trad.* p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* XI. 514; cf. Shepherd, *Pattern* p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* XI. 820 seq.

## 13 THE TEACHER-PUPIL RELATIONSHIP

The teacher-pupil relationship is indeed implied in the mention of Artemis teaching Scamandrius to hunt,<sup>1</sup> Apollo teaching Calchas to prophesy,<sup>2</sup> and Athene teaching Phereclus to build ships.<sup>3</sup> Zeus and Poseidon taught Antilochos to use the chariot,<sup>4</sup> and on the purely human level Achilles taught Patroklos the use of drugs,<sup>5</sup> while Phoenix was assigned as teacher to Achilles. But the ideal teacher of mythology was the wise centaur Cheiron.

## 14 CHEIRON AS TEACHER

Homer seldom mentions Cheiron, but the few references he does make to him indicate quite clearly that he is not ignorant of the tradition which attributes the role of teacher to the centaur. For example, he is mentioned in passing as the teacher of Achilles in the use of drugs<sup>6</sup> and of Asclepius in the same art.<sup>7</sup> But Homer's plan required Phoenix for Achilles' teacher and Cheiron was deliberately thrust aside. But he comes into his own in later poets, and in many of the references to him they were evidently drawing upon the tradition which Homer had rejected, though in some of the late notices of him there is a tendency to refer all educational subjects to him and to multiply his pupils to include even Apollo himself.

In Hesiod Cheiron is recognized as the tutor of Jason<sup>8</sup> and his son by Medea.<sup>9</sup> In these references the verb *τρέφω* 'rear' is used of his relationship to his pupil, not *διδάσκω* 'teach'. This implies that Cheiron was responsible for the whole development of his pupil, moral, physical and intellectual, and not merely or solely for the imparting of specific aspects of knowledge. In this regard Cheiron represents the influence on

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* V. 51.<sup>2</sup> *Il.* I. 72.<sup>3</sup> *Il.* V. 61.<sup>4</sup> *Il.* XXIII. 307.<sup>5</sup> *Il.* XI. 832.<sup>6</sup> *Il.* XI. 832.<sup>7</sup> *Il.* IV. 218-9.<sup>8</sup> Hesiod, *Fr.* 155 cf. Edelstein, *Asclepius* T. I. quoting scholiast to Pindar N. III. 92.<sup>9</sup> Hesiod, *Theog.* 1001.

character produced by the pupil's association with a good master in what we should term a 'general education'. It is a similar ideal to that implied by Homer in the relationship between Phœnix and Achilles. Cheiron's position as tutor of Achilles is also attested by Hesiod (in *Fr.* 96, 49), and in this he is in agreement with the reference, already quoted, in Homer. Among the poems ascribed to Hesiod there are fragments surviving of a collection of maxims and wise sayings under the title of *Precepts of Cheiron*. The title reflects Cheiron's reputation in the mythic tradition as a teacher.

Pindar is an author who seems to have been well versed in all the traditions of mythology and folklore, and he makes several references to Cheiron's function as a teacher. In the third Pythian Ode (ll. 5-7) we learn that Apollo entrusted his own son Asclepius to the wise centaur who 'reared' him and 'taught' him to cure 'all manner of diseases'. Under Cheiron's instruction Asclepius became proficient in every branch of medicine and so great was his skill that he was able even to bring a dead man back to life. In the third Nemean (l. 54) Asclepius is again mentioned as a pupil of Cheiron, alongside of Jason and Achilles. Pindar here insists that this tale 'was told by men of former days', so he is evidently drawing on a source of great antiquity. The mention of Asclepius and Jason in this passage as 'fellow-pupils' of Achilles<sup>1</sup> is intended to emphasize the excellence of Achilles' education. We should be inclined to say in our terminology that Achilles 'went to a good school', thus following in his father's footsteps.<sup>2</sup> Jason's attendance at Cheiron's school is again mentioned in the fourth Pythian (ll. 102 and 115), where we learn that he was entrusted to Cheiron 'to rear' when still a babe, and that he spent twenty years under Cheiron's care.

The later notices of Cheiron are not so valuable for our present purpose, but the fact that they ascribe to him a large number of pupils and a multiplicity of subjects of instruction does

<sup>1</sup> This cannot mean that they attended at the same time, but that they went to the same school.

<sup>2</sup> Pindar, *Isth.* VII. 42.

indicate a strong and ancient tradition concerning his qualities as an educator. He became in fact the mythological pattern of the ideal teacher, and as such any new subject or method tended to be attributed to him. Thus if we were to follow the later authorities we should have to include among his pupils Peleus, Achilles, Telamon, Theseus,<sup>1</sup> Machaon, Podalcirios, Cephalus,<sup>2</sup> and even Apollo, and among the subjects of instruction medicine, hunting,<sup>3</sup> the science of warfare, music, and in fact every branch of knowledge.

From the traditions attaching to Cheiron, then, and from the evidence of Homer, we may conclude that there were in times prior to Homer teachers providing some sort of general education by individual instruction as well as men of specialist knowledge who taught their speciality to selected pupils. These, together with the poets and the mythology, constituted the educational background of the times. We shall now turn to consider Homer as an educator, or as a mirror of the educational climate of his age.

## 15 HOMER

### (i) DATE AND AUTHORSHIP

The Homeric poems have been variously dated by scholars from the eleventh century to the sixth.<sup>4</sup> The trend of modern scholarship is to favour a late date. Wade-Gery and Webster are typical in assigning them to the late eighth century.<sup>5</sup>

Though there is now more agreement on the question of date, the question of single or multiple authorship for either or both poems is still hotly debated. Wade-Gery,<sup>6</sup> for example, places the *Iliad* in the eighth century and the *Odyssey* substantially later, with Hesiod in between. This theory posits a different

<sup>1</sup> Edelstein, *Avlepius* T. 59 quoting Philostratus, *Heroicus* 9.

<sup>2</sup> ib. vol. II p. 13 and T. 56 quoting Xen. *Cyneg.* I. 1-16.

<sup>3</sup> ib. quoting Apoll. *Bib.* III. 10, 3, 5-4, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Leaf, in his ed. of *Iliad* p. xv, places him in eleventh century, Murray (*Epic*) in the sixth.

<sup>5</sup> Wade-Gery, *Poet* p. 2; Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 282.

<sup>6</sup> Wade-Gery, *Poet* p. 2.

poet for each of the two epics: Finley<sup>1</sup> likewise believes in two Homers sandwiching Hesiod and dated in the eighth century. Webster<sup>2</sup> places the *Iliad* at about 750 B.C. and the *Odyssey* at about 720 B.C. and admits the possibility of separate authorship. Carpenter dates Homer at 630–620 B.C.<sup>3</sup> Page believes in multiple authorship for both poems and that they were composed in different areas and belong to different epic streams, the *Odyssey* being later.<sup>4</sup> He seems to date them both in the eighth century.

This complicated question will not be debated here. We shall use the term 'Homer' without begging the question of authorship and be interested in the poems mainly as evidence of educational trends. But for the purposes of the argument we shall assume Webster's dates of 750 and 720 B.C. and the possibility of two separate poets each assembling inherited material into unified wholes.

## (ii) THE NATURE OF HOMERIC EPIC

The streams of epic divided at some time in the Dark Ages, the one branch on the mainland leading to Hesiod, and the other, in Ionia,<sup>5</sup> leading to Homer. The mainland branch placed greater emphasis on catalogues, but the Ionian, though less interested in these, did not forget them. As we have just noted, Page has argued that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* belong to different streams, thus positing a third major stream.<sup>6</sup> But though scholars divide on the question whether one or two poets brought the two poems to their final forms, the majority believe them both to belong to the same essential stream.

The individual parts of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* bear all the marks of oral poetry – typical scenes reworked for different

<sup>1</sup> Finley, *World* pp. 32–7 (pp. 23–6 of Meridian ed.).

<sup>2</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 282.

<sup>3</sup> Carpenter, *Folktale* p. 111.

<sup>4</sup> Page, *Od.* p. 156.

<sup>5</sup> But cf. Whitman, *Homer* pp. 50–63, who argues for Athens as the place of preservation of the epics. He believes that the Greeks did not settle in Ionia till near the end of the Dark Ages.

<sup>6</sup> Page, *Od.* p. 156.

occasions, formulae, repetition and all the characteristics emphasized by Parry in this class of poetry. For centuries the tale of Troy must have been told in a series of short poems, either recited separately as requested at the courts of the time, where courts still existed,<sup>1</sup> or at the tables of the wealthy in oligarchic constitutions. There is nothing improbable in the idea that the whole tale might be told from start to finish in straightforward narrative in a series of disparate recitations. In fact, it has been suggested<sup>2</sup> that the order of development of epic poetry is from short lays through continuous straight serial narrative to the dramatic unity of the Homeric poems. The significant feature of the Homeric epics is their unified design and complicated artistry which could only be appreciated by and could therefore only have been intended for audiences gathered together long enough to hear the poems through from start to finish.

Unless [says Webster<sup>3</sup>] all that has been written of Homer's technique is an illusion, no audience could perceive the subtle perfection of his art if they only heard a thousand lines at a time. For this reason alone recital by relays of bards at a festival must be assumed for the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are the only poems for which this need be assumed, since we know of no other poems of comparable complication.

Lord, however, has denied the festival theory,<sup>4</sup> claiming that a festival provided a poor opportunity for recital of long poems as there would be so much activity going on. In his view it was the fact of dictation to a scribe, at leisure, that provided the opportunity for the recording of the poems. This of itself, however, would not explain the length of the poems. It seems highly unlikely that Homer would have composed so long a poem with no prospect of its continuous performance and merely because the opportunity arose to have it recorded.

<sup>1</sup> Page, *Il.* p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 273 referring to J. T. Kakridis (*Homeric Researches* pp. seq.).

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 268.

<sup>4</sup> Lord, *Singer* p. 153.



The Homeric poems, therefore, mark a change from court to festival poetry. Panionian festivals, meetings of the Ionian people lasting for perhaps as long as a week, were instituted in the eighth century, and it was for these or similar occasions that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were composed.<sup>1</sup>

It is now widely held that the complicated unity of the poems presupposes the use of writing as an aid to composition or at least as a prerequisite of their transmission.<sup>2</sup> It is still an oral technique, but transferred from the poet's mind to paper. Now the alphabet, as distinct from the Phoenician syllabary, is a Greek invention, and Wade-Gery suggests<sup>3</sup> that it was invented as a notation for Greek verse, for which purpose it would have distinct advantages over a syllabary. This has been denied by Page and also by Whitman,<sup>4</sup> and while the oral technique of formula repetition would have facilitated the reading of even Linear B or other syllabic script, it cannot be denied that alphabetic writing would have made the reader's task simpler. A further argument in favour of a written text emerges from what we have said above about festival poetry. This requires a team of reciters and the training of such a team would be immeasurably easier with a written text. Wade-Gery has suggested that Homer's great achievement was to reduce the oral technique to writing:

Parry was conscious that he had reached few firm conclusions; early death found him still in the stage of observation. But I believe he felt quite certain that Homer had not used writing. I have argued the contrary: that we see in the *Iliad* what happens when an oral tradition becomes literate.<sup>5</sup> Homer retained, of course, the oral devices: he wrote the language as he had heard it used.<sup>6</sup>

It is almost certain, as Webster suggests,<sup>7</sup> that poets had been experimenting for perhaps a century with the use of writing

<sup>1</sup> Wade-Gery, *Poet* p. 5; Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* pp. 268-9.

<sup>2</sup> Lord, *Singer* p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Wade-Gery, *Poet* p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Page, *Od.* p. 169; Whitman, *Homer* p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> Wade-Gery, *Poet* p. 39; cf. Lord, *Singer* p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Wade-Gery, *Poet* p. 40.

<sup>7</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 274.

to provide a uniform text for the use of reciters at the great festivals. But it was Homer who first exploited the new device to the full.

It is, then, very possible that Homer made use of writing and composed for the great festivals. These would have provided an ideal forum for his educational purpose, fulfilling a role not unlike that of the assemblies of later times to which Hippias addressed his views. It is this educational purpose that we shall now consider.

### (iii) HOMER AS EDUCATOR

(a) *The ideals of character.* We have noted before that Homer is the product of a long tradition. The general outline of his stories and the names and actions of his characters were more or less fixed by that tradition. But just as the tradition had slowly changed with the progress of society, so Homer himself was free to re-arrange the material for his own purposes and to project into the characters the ideals of conduct which he or the society of his time valued most. Hence we should expect to find reflected in the characters of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* the patterns of character which the educators of the time strove to produce. We shall now, therefore, briefly examine some of the chief qualities exemplified in Homer's heroes, remembering, however, that our picture of these as the educational objectives of the time will be rendered somewhat inaccurate by reason of the fact that the force of the poetic tradition on which Homer drew must have caused many of the ideals of earlier times to survive in the characters of Homer's heroes.

The society that Homer describes is an aristocratic one, whose chief occupation was the practice of the art of war. The virtues emphasized are predominantly martial ones, as unflinching courage and strong endurance. The ideal of conduct is summed up in the term ἀρετή ('arete'). It is not an abstract moral quality, but can be applied to excellence in any field, even to such things as the speed of horses. As an ideal of character it is the sum total of a man's strength, courage and achievement. All the noble deeds of the heroes were directed

towards winning a reputation for ἀρετή. Peleus had counselled Achilles 'always to excel others' (αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν).<sup>1</sup> A man's reputation for ἀρετή was his most prized possession, dearer to him than country or life itself. Any act or word that diminished his *arete*, or personal reputation, was an insult of the greatest moment. Agamemnon's act in depriving Achilles of Briseis was an affront to Achilles' *arete* and led to his withdrawal from the fight and all its tragic consequences. To Achilles his personal honour was of greater importance than loyalty to his comrades or his duty as a soldier. He complains to his mother Thetis that Agamemnon has dishonoured him:

Mother, since of a truth thou didst bear me to so brief a span of life, honour at least the Olympian ought to have granted me, even Zeus that thundereth on high; but now doth he honour me not, no, not one whit. Verily, Atreus' son, wide-ruling Agamemnon, hath done me dishonour; for he hath taken away my meed of honour and keepeth her of his own violent deed.<sup>2</sup>

Thetis prays to Zeus that he may grant honour to her son and punish the Achaeans:

Father Zeus, if ever I gave thee aid amid the immortal gods, whether by word or deed, fulfil thou this my desire: do honour to my son, that is doomed to earliest death of all men: now hath Agamemnon king of men done him dishonour for he hath taken away his meed of honour and keepeth her of his own violent deed. But honour thou him, Zeus of Olympus, lord of counsel; grant thou victory to the Trojans the while until the Achaians do my son honour and exalt him with recompense.<sup>3</sup>

In the mission to Achilles in Book IX Odysseus appeals to his love of honour by reminding him of Peleus' words:

My son, strength shall Athene and Hera give thee if they will; but do thou refrain thy proud soul in thy breast, for gentlemindedness is the better part; and withdraw from

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* XI. 784; cf. VI. 208.    <sup>2</sup> *Il.* I. 352; trans. Lang (*Med. Lib.* p. 11.)

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* I. 503; trans. *ib.* p. 15.

mischievous strife, that so the Argives may honour thee the more, both young and old.<sup>1</sup>

Achilles in reply complains that he gets no profit of his courage:

he that abideth at home hath equal share with him that fighteth his best, and in like honour are held both the coward and the brave; death cometh alike to the untoiling and to him that hath toiled long. Neither have I any profit for that I endured tribulation of soul, ever staking my life in fight,<sup>2</sup>

for Agamemnon has taken his meed of honour.

When, later, Achilles does finally relent, Agamemnon insists on his accepting costly gifts, so that the slight to his honour may be fully repaired. Achilles' honour demanded that he avenge Patroklos' death, and though he knew full well that he was fated to die soon after Hector, he prized honour more than life and went forth to battle. There is in Achilles' tragic choice of honour and short life a high moral significance, perhaps nowhere so clearly brought out as in that memorable scene where the dying Hector reminds him of his own imminent and inevitable doom, and Achilles accepts the fact with calm resignation, 'Die, for my death, I will accept it whensoever Zeus and the other immortal gods are minded to accomplish it.'<sup>3</sup>

We can see in Achilles' tragic fate the paramount importance to himself of a man's personal reputation for *arete*. But Achilles went too far. When, through the embassy of Book IX Agamemnon offered more than reasonable amends, Achilles put himself quite definitely in the wrong by refusing to accept. His justifiable anger degenerated into overweening pride or *hybris*, which was the greatest of all sins, and Homer makes it clear that Achilles' tragedy in the loss of his friend Patroklos and in the hastening of his own doom was due to this moral fault.

It was the same *hybris* that led Achilles to maltreat Hector's body by tying it to the rail of his chariot, and of this act of

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* IX. 254; trans. Lang (Mod. Lib. p. 154.)

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* IX. 318-22; trans. *ib.* p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* XXII. 365-6; trans. *ib.* p. 411.

barbarism Homer indicates his disapproval: 'he devised foul entreatment of noble Hector'.<sup>1</sup> Such a deed, possibly acceptable to the society of the time when it first entered the poetic tradition, was out of harmony with the ideals of Homer's day.

Achilles had transgressed the moral law also when he rejected the supplications of the dying Hector, and those of Lycaon.<sup>2</sup> In withholding from Agamemnon the respect due to a superior he had fallen short of the heroic standards of good manners, in which regard Diomedes stands in strong contrast to him.<sup>3</sup> Achilles' lapse on this occasion must, however, be attributed to strong provocation, for in his manner of receiving the embassy of Book IX he conducts himself with due restraint<sup>4</sup> and in his interview with old Priam, when he was seeking back the body of his son, despite the great tension of the occasion he behaves with splendid courtesy and deep respect for age. Such courtesy is a characteristic of epic society, as Homer depicts it, and a magnificent example of it may be seen in the conversation of Glaucus and Diomedes in the scene where they meet and exchange their armour.

Agamemnon's conduct in the seizure of Briseis exhibits also the evil consequences of *hybris*. Like Achilles, he is under the influence of *Ate* or Delusion, but he recovers sooner and has sufficient concern for the welfare of his troops to offer restoration and amends to Achilles.<sup>5</sup> Although somewhat afraid of accepting responsibility for great decisions he is otherwise a good leader of his men, ever ready with encouragement. He was not averse to using a little political psychology to try and shift the responsibility for continuing the war on to the rank and file, but his 'testing of the people', though perhaps a cunning move, produced the opposite to the intended effect, and it was left to Odysseus to extricate him from the difficulty created.<sup>6</sup>

For Odysseus is the man of intelligence par excellence, and in any situation requiring tact, cunning or finesse, it is he who

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* XXII. 395; trans. Lang (Mod. Lib. p. 412.)      <sup>2</sup> *Il.* XXI. 74-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* IV. 370-402; cf. Shepherd, *Pattern* p. 40.      <sup>4</sup> *Il.* IX. 197; cf. *ib.* p. 71.

<sup>5</sup> cf. Shepherd, *Pattern* p. 69.      <sup>6</sup> cf. *ib.* p. 27.

solves the difficulties. He takes part in the unsuccessful embassy to Achilles, and in his speech he adopts the right psychological approach by appeal to his sense of honour. He is selected for the dangerous expedition to the Trojan camp, which he carries through successfully. It is the same cunning and resourcefulness coupled with unfailing courage which carry him unscathed through his many adventures in the *Odyssey* and which earn him the stock epithets of 'many-wiled' and 'much-enduring'.

In strong contrast to Odysseus stands Ajax, who represents honest strength and courage, with no special gifts of intellect. He is the plain man of action, while Odysseus combines action with intellect.

Hector is the ideal husband and father, and dutiful son, a patriotic leader of his people, with a courage inspired not by the pure love of fighting, but by the desire to defend his native land and dear ones.

The relations between Patroklos and Achilles represent an exalted ideal of personal friendship in the cause of which no sacrifice, not even of life itself, is too great, as Achilles proved.

The virtue of hospitality, so sacred to the Greeks, is emphasized even in the *Iliad* by Achilles' reception of old Priam and by the fact that even Helen found hospitable reception in Troy. Paris' abuse of hospitality was his great crime and the cause of woe to himself and others. In the *Odyssey* regard for hospitality is evident in the treatment that Odysseus received at the hands of Alcinous and his court, and the terrible fate meted out to the suitors is a striking instance of the retribution that follows its abuse.

A virtue not especially evident in the epic heroes is that of modesty but it is exemplified in the characters of Diomedes and Telemachus.

The qualities most admired in women are beauty, fidelity and domesticity. All the heroines are distinguished for their beauty, Andromache and Penelope for their fidelity and domesticity, while Helen's infidelity brings great censure upon her and great suffering upon many others.

In short, the qualities of character and conduct most emphasized in the heroes are their sense of honour, high courage, intelligence, friendship, hospitality, leadership, patriotism, modesty and courtesy, with fidelity, domesticity and beauty the chief virtues of women. Homer's heroes often fall short of these standards, but it is against the background of these ideals that the action takes place and that their lapses have moral significance. Most of these qualities were probably attached to the heroes in some degree in the tradition, but it seems more than likely that Homer contributed not a little to the fuller development of the ideals of character represented in the heroes and that the emphasis on the moral significance of their actions is due to him.

(b) *Aim and method of education.* The development of character was the chief objective of Epic Education. There are a few hints in the poems of how this was achieved. Our chief document in the *Iliad* is the speech of Phoenix in Book IX where he endeavours to persuade Achilles to accept the petitions of the embassy.

To thee did the old knight Pelcus send me the day he sent thee to Agamemnon forth from Phthia, a stripling yet unskilled in equal war and in debate wherein men wax pre-eminent. Therefore he sent me to teach thee all these things, to be *both a speaker of words and a doer of deeds*.<sup>1</sup>

The words in italics formulate the educational ideal of Phoenix. It is the development of the rounded personality, the training of both the intellect and the body. When Achilles entered upon this last stage of his education he was 'unskilled in war and in debate'. Phoenix taught him both. 'Yea, I reared thee to this greatness, thou god-like Achilles, *with my heart's love*.'<sup>2</sup> The method he adopted was that of individual tuition, 'working through the close association of pupil and tutor. In conjunction with oral instruction on modes of conduct, the pupil also learns by imitating his teacher in all their joint

<sup>1</sup> *Il. IX.* 435-443; trans. Lang (Mod. Lib. p. 159).

<sup>2</sup> *Il. IX.* 485; trans. ib. p. 160.

activities. The relationship has a strong emotional basis – ‘with my heart’s love’ – as Phoenix reminds him, and this bond of affection, between teacher and pupil facilitates the learning process.

In the speech which Phoenix delivers he uses all the educational devices at his command. First there is an emotional appeal, in which he reminds Achilles of how he nursed him as an infant: ‘Oft hast thou stained the doublet on my breast with sputtering of wine in thy sorry helplessness.’<sup>1</sup> Then comes a piece of direct moralizing, with a warning of the anger of Zeus that Achilles is bringing upon himself:

Moreover, prayers of penitence are daughters of great Zeus, halting and wrinkled and of eyes askance, that have their task withal to go in the steps of Sin. For Sin is strong and fleet of foot, wherefore she far outrunneth all prayers, and goeth before them over all the earth, making men fall, and Prayers follow behind to heal the harm. Now whosoever reverenceth Zeus’ daughters when they draw near, him they greatly bless and hear his petitions; but when one denieth them and stiffly refuseth, then depart they and make prayer unto Zeus the son of Kronos that sin may come upon such an one, that he may fall and pay the price. Nay, Achilles, look thou too that there attend upon the daughters of Zeus the reverence that bendeth the heart of all men that be right-minded.<sup>2</sup>

Next, a logical analysis of the rights of the present case and then the instructive example of the mythic parallel of Meleager from which he draws the moral that Achilles should relent. Phoenix’ speech failed of its purpose, but it must have been along such lines as these that the moral and intellectual side of Achilles’ education had proceeded.

Page asserts that the embassy originally consisted of Ajax and Odysseus only, basing his argument on the use of the dual verb in the episode.<sup>3</sup> Webster attempts to explain away the dual verb by arguing that Ajax and Odysseus are the official

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* IX. 49 ? trans. ib. p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* IX. 502-14; trans. ib. p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> Page, *Il.* pp. 297-8.



ambassadors, but this scarcely accounts for the major part that Phoenix plays in the scene.<sup>1</sup> Page's main point seems proved, namely that there is an accretion of two different stories here. Page further asserts that the notion of human responsibility and heaven's retribution are at variance with the usual epic morality, in which the gods, not man, determine human action.<sup>2</sup> He uses the inconsistency of the Embassy and the Reconciliation with the rest of the poem as proofs of multiple authorship,<sup>3</sup> but if we assume that Homer deliberately combined the two Embassy stories we may see in this scene a reflection of his educational purpose and his desire to bring the poem into line with more advanced moral attitudes. This process is the obverse of the expurgation technique which has the same educational purpose. Webster has remarked<sup>4</sup> that divine justice and human responsibility are suitably emphasized throughout both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. 'This story of human responsibility is the central story into which the mass of traditional material, carrying with it traditional views of gods and men, is woven.'<sup>5</sup> Like Hesiod on the mainland, but independently of him, 'Homer in Ionia was also concerned with the problem of divine government, human responsibility, and justice in the polis.'<sup>6</sup>

(c) *Education through experience.* In the tale of Odysseus' adventures we see the educational advantages that travel and experience bring to a man whose education is in other respects already complete. For Odysseus on his travels learns much of different lands and peoples and customs, and at practically every stage there is some god to teach him the correct moves when his own resources have reached their limit. Thus Athene frequently appears to him with encouragement and advice. Hermes teaches him how to deal with Circe, Circe herself tells him how to summon the shades of the dead, that he may learn from Teiresias the way of his returning. Athene herself instructs

<sup>1</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 248.

<sup>2</sup> Page, *Il.* p. 301.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 304.

<sup>4</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 297.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* p. 297.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* p. 298.

him in the plot to deal with the wooers. Odysseus is therefore ever ready to learn from experience and profit by instruction.

In the *Odyssey*, however, our best evidence for Homer's educational theories is in those sections dealing primarily with the adventures of Telemachus, to which the title *Telemacheia* is applied. For Telemachus is the one character who shows any real development and we are able to see how that development takes place.<sup>1</sup>

When we first meet him he is helpless and without resource or initiative to protect himself against the ravages the suitors are making on his property. Athene in the guise of Mentor urges him to dismiss the wooers to their homes and send his mother back to her father Icarius, and then set sail in search of his father. When he tells the suitors of his intention to call an assembly they mock and taunt him. At the assembly he admits his own weakness:

for there is no man now alive such as Odysseus was, to keep ruin from the house. As for me I am no wise strong like him to ward mine own; verily to the end of my days shall I be a weakling and all unskilled in prowess<sup>2</sup>

and cannot find it in his heart to return his mother to Icarius.

Again Athene appeared in the guise of Mentor and promised to arrange a ship for his intended voyage and to accompany him. On arrival at Pylos he still lacks confidence and has to ask Mentor how to approach Nestor.<sup>3</sup> When the time came to speak he 'spake with confidence, for Athene herself had put boldness in his heart'.<sup>4</sup>

From Nestor he learns much of the returning of the other Greeks and something of the deeds of his father. Nestor tells him of Orestes' vengeance, whom he bids him emulate.<sup>5</sup> Mentor leaves him with Nestor to carry on on his own, and

<sup>1</sup> Woodhouse, *Composition* p. 212; cf. Jaeger, *Paid.* v. I. p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Od.* II. 58-64; trans. Lang (Med. Lib. p. 17).

<sup>3</sup> *Od.* III. 22-4; trans. ib. p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> *Od.* II. 76-7; trans. ib. p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Od.* II. 193-200; trans. ib. p. 35.

after hospitable treatment he is sent by Nestor with his son Peisistratos to the court of Menelaus at Sparta. From Menelaus he learns more of the wondrous deeds of the Achaeans and of their returns, and of the fact that Odysseus was being kept perforce on the isle of Calypso.

The wooers back in Ithaca were amazed to learn that Telemachus had accomplished his voyage to Pylos and Sparta and even began to fear him, and set an ambush for him on his return.

Already the guidance of Mentor and the experience of travel and association with princes with the glimpse of a larger life had wrought much transformation in his character. Later, when plotting with his father for the destruction of the suitors, he is able to make his contribution as an equal,<sup>1</sup> and so confident is he now that he even suggests to Piraeus that he will slay the suitors. 'He develops', says Woodhouse,<sup>2</sup> 'from one who is at the mercy of circumstances and at the mercy of the will of others, to one who himself dominates both.' Woodhouse also argues with some cogency that the *Telemacheia* could never have had independent existence in the Saga, but being Homer's method of constructing and cementing together the *Odyssey*, must be Homer's own invention. If this is so, it follows that the theory of character development through the guidance of an elder, through association with different types of men and the general broadening effect of travel and experience compelling a man to stand on his own feet, is also Homer's own, and, taken with the points made in the Phoenix speech, represents Homer's contribution to educational theory.

(d) *Homer's expurgations of the Saga.* Homer's educational purpose may be seen in certain places where he alters the tradition to make it conform to the more advanced ideals of his own time. We have noted above in another context several examples of his expurgation of the mythic material.<sup>3</sup> In the mention of Arete in *Odyssey* VII. 54 seq. the hand of the educator is again evident. She is said to be 'from the same parents' as Alcinous. Now

<sup>1</sup> cf. Woodhouse, *Composition* p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 213.

<sup>3</sup> cf. p. 27 seq.

editors and translators render the word for 'parents' (τοκίων) here as 'ancestors', but that is certainly not the normal sense of the word. There follows a genealogy which makes her the daughter of Rhexenor, Alcinous' brother. Rhexenor died 'childless' (ἄκοντος), but this is qualified by the phrase 'leaving alone one daughter Arete' so that ἄκοντος would have to mean 'without male issue'. The genealogy, then, seems to be endeavouring to make the relationship between Arete and Alcinous a more respectable alliance of uncle and niece rather than brother and sister. Gilbert Murray, consistent with his view of the late composition of the *Odyssey*, explains this as due to some sixth-century educator, but the passage itself, while not inconsistent with his view, does not necessarily support it. For the genealogy is a very old form and could quite as well belong to an early stage of the tradition as be a late interpolation imitating an ancient form.<sup>1</sup> What seems most likely is that in the original *saga* Arete was Alcinous' sister. But with the development of the moral attitude that tended to bring the myths into conformity with prevailing human standards, a new genealogy crept into the *saga* mitigating the evil of the relationship. Homer knew both these genealogies and cleverly combined them in such a way as to force the sense of 'ancestors' on to the word *tokeon* and the sense of 'without male issue' on to *akouros*.<sup>2</sup> On this view the educational treatment of the story had begun some little time before Homer, but in making use of the newer version Homer too shows himself an educator.

Other examples of expurgations are quoted by Murray. These include the dragging of Hector *dead* not alive behind the chariot of Achilles, though the original legend is preserved in Sophocles, Euripides and Vergil; the diminution of the agony of the treacherous handmaidens; the failure of Achilles to carry out his threat to defile Hector's body, and the glossing over of the sacrifice of the Trojan captives.<sup>3</sup> These are, but few of

<sup>1</sup> Murray, *Epic* p. 126 seq.

<sup>2</sup> The word does not seem to be used elsewhere in this sense.

<sup>3</sup> Murray, *Epic* pp. 126-42; cf. Sophocles, *Ajax* 1031, Euripides, *Andromeda* 399, and for Achilles' threat see *Il.* XXIII. 24.

many such examples. Webster<sup>1</sup> suggests that the 'enlightened rationalist outlook' exemplified by the expurgations originated in Athens in the Dark period. But the process culminated in Homer with his deliberate educational outlook.<sup>2</sup>

## 16 HESIOD

We have been at pains to stress how Homer reveals his educational outlook by his treatment of the mythic material and in particular by his expurgations. Hesiod, perhaps independently, followed the same line, but whereas Homer's expurgations are, in comparison, almost surreptitious, Hesiod's handling of the material is inspired by an overmastering moral, educational and philosophical purpose.

In lines clearly alluding to epic material which he shared with Homer, he declares his purpose of setting straight the mythic record. Odysseus had told 'many lies like unto truth'.<sup>3</sup> Hesiod's Muses 'know how to tell many tales like unto truth; and we know, when we wish, to speak truthfully'.<sup>4</sup>

Though 'open polemic was not the custom among the early Hellenic rhapsodes',<sup>5</sup> Hesiod is here anticipating the later practice of poets and thinkers of criticizing one another's views.

The principle of expurgation and of rehandling mythic material has been discussed in relation to Homer and need not be laboured in the case of Hesiod, except to add that there is considerable evidence that Hesiod invented versions to express his views.<sup>6</sup> Hesiod was a self-conscious thinker, but as he lived before the age of ordered philosophical thought he expresses his views mythopoeically. In this brief account his mythopoeic method will not be discussed in any detail, but we shall be

\* <sup>1</sup> Webster, *From Myc. to Hom.* p. 293.

<sup>2</sup> The 'expurgation' theory was first emphatically stated by Gilbert Murray (*Epic*), but Sir John Myres (*Homer* p. 205) is somewhat critical of it.

<sup>3</sup> *Od.* XIX. 203.

<sup>5</sup> Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Theogony* 27.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* p. 56.

content, with a brief straight-forward outline of those of his views which influenced later educational thought.

At the core of Hesiod's thought is the idea of historical evolution – evolution of a divine, physical and human cosmos.<sup>1</sup> These three aspects of evolution are the subject of the *Theogony*. Hesiod traces the development in each sphere by means of the genealogical catalogue – a form already familiar in Homer with a less sophisticated purpose.

In each sphere there is the same evolution from disorder to order, from conflict to authority. Zeus succeeds where his predecessors failed because he developed political wisdom. Where his predecessors endeavoured to repress the symbols of violence existing in the universe Zeus finds a function for them in his re-organized political structure. Where the early rulers, Sky and Kronos, devoured their children, Zeus' new order finds room for natural increase, and he himself 'proliferates without conflict between generations, and with unparalleled fecundity'.<sup>2</sup> The catalogue at the end of the *Theogony* of Zeus' alliances and offspring symbolizes the new order. By his relations with mortal women he bridges the gap between the human and the divine,<sup>3</sup> a fact which adds to the stability of the world order.

The energy that drives the evolutionary process is Desire<sup>4</sup> which expresses itself in procreation, the extent of which is the measure of evolutionary success. Like the modern pragmatists Hesiod believes in the inevitability of growth and change.

The human cosmos is dependent on, and reflects, the divine order. Just as Zeus, by political wisdom and judicious (but not always just) use of force, maintains a stable though precarious balance between the forces of good and evil (the latter are never destroyed, but kept in check), so in the human cosmos there is always some evil to balance each good. Prometheus' gift of stolen fire brought untold possibilities of civilization to mankind, but also induced Zeus to impose on men the curse of woman-kind. The implications of the Prometheus myth were to be

<sup>1</sup> Brown (ed.), Hesiod, *Theog.* p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* p. 8.

taken up again, as we shall see later, by Protagoras as the basis of his theory of society.

A concept that was to be of tremendous importance for later educational thinkers was that of Justice. The principle of retributive justice had played some part in the *Theogony*.<sup>1</sup> In the catalogue of Zeus' marriages he produced from his union with Themis (Law) the Hours – Good Order, Justice and prosperous Peace 'who watch over the labours of mankind' – and the Fates – Clotho (Spinner), Lachesis (Allotter) and Atropos (Inflexible) 'who distribute good and evil among mankind'.<sup>2</sup> In the *Works and Days* Justice is much more prominent. She is revered by the immortal gods themselves<sup>3</sup> and 'whenever one injureth her with crooked reviling, straightway she sitteth by Zeus the Father, the son of Kronos, and telleth of the unrighteous mind of men, till the people pay for the folly of their kings, who with ill thoughts wrest aside judgements, declaring falsely'.<sup>4</sup> And Justice is aided by thirty thousand immortal watchers, who keep an eye on the actions, just and unjust, of men. Whereas fishes and beasts devour one another, since they know not Justice, Zeus gave Justice to mankind, 'which proves by far the best'.<sup>5</sup>

This emphasis on an absolute and immanent Justice in the affairs of men is one of Hesiod's greatest contributions to ethical thought. The position of the upper classes depended on their power and privilege and on their monopoly of the dispensation of justice. Hesiod may be said to have made the first breach in their position by his concept of an ultimate criterion of Justice with its power of eventual retribution, and from now on it became a slogan and a battle-cry of the underprivileged in their fight for both educational and political equality. Solon was later to set up Dike as his criterion in his arbitration between rich and poor, and Plato was to base his whole educational system on a conception of Justice.

The battle for educational equality was first fought and won in the elementary sphere, and privilege shifted to the higher

<sup>1</sup> Brown (ed.), Hes. *Theog.* p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* 903, 906.

<sup>3</sup> W.D. 257.

W.D. 258–62; trans. Mair.

<sup>5</sup> W.D. 280.

field of education. By the end of our period aristocracy and wealth were still entrenched in tertiary education.

In general, all of Hesiod's work is informed by a strong didactic aim, both on the grand philosophic (though mythopoeic) scale, and on the level of specific, practical injunction in the affairs of everyday life. The *Works and Days* is in the tradition of the Homeric *parainesis*, which remained one of the chief methods of moral instruction right down to Isocrates and beyond.

## 17 THE LATER POETS

The poets who followed Homer and Hesiod maintained for the most part the same didactic purpose throughout the varied forms of poetry that they practised, and made use of myth as the vehicle of their thoughts.

There were, of course, notable exceptions and in his attitude to mythology Xenophanes is one. He praises the man who 'expresses thoughts that are noble, not treating of the battles of the Titans or of the Giants, figments of our predecessors, nor of violent civil war, in which there is nothing useful'.<sup>1</sup> He criticizes Homer and Hesiod, for

both Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods all things that are shameful and a reproach among mankind: theft, adultery and mutual deception.<sup>2</sup>

In this criticism of Homer's and Hesiod's use of mythology he anticipates Plato. And in his criticism of the exaggerated esteem in which athletes were held he is the forerunner of Isocrates.<sup>3</sup> Against the traditional conception of *arete* he sets the *arete* of Wisdom:

For it is not the presence of a good boxer in the community, nor of one good at the Pentathlon or at wrestling, nor even of one who excels at fleetness of foot . . . it is not

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, *Ancilla* 21. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* 21. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Antid.* 250, 301; *Rul. Myt.* 4-5. For Isocrates' criticism of myth, see Isocrates, *Panath.* 1.



these that will give the State a better constitution. Small would be the enjoyment that a City-state would reap over the athletic victory of a citizen beside the banks of Pisa!<sup>1</sup>

The re-working of myth in the choral lyricists was frequently for purely literary effect, but just as often for political or propagandist purposes. Stesichorus' handling of the Agamemnon tradition to assist Spartan political propaganda, and his palinode, on Helen, is one example of this usage. Another is Pindar's palinode on Neoptolemus to placate Aeginetan opinion. Propaganda, of course, is a perversion of education.<sup>2</sup>

Pindar is especially important to our theme for his treatment of the nature-nurture controversy. In the face of the challenge of the common people to aristocratic privilege he sets up the criterion of noble birth and divine descent, and the genealogy finds yet another use. He does not completely deny the value of education, but it must be based on hereditary talent.<sup>3</sup> He himself, he claims, is a born poet, while his rivals have but *learnt* the craft. Nature and teaching are a favourite antithesis with Pindar.<sup>4</sup>

The rivals whom he chiefly had in mind were Simonides and Bacchylides, who assigned a greater importance to training. Simonides himself had been in charge of a choir-school and Bacchylides acknowledges what one poet can learn from another:

Poet is heir to poet, now as of old; for in sooth it is no light task to find the gates of virgin song.<sup>5</sup>

The influence of this controversy on the thinkers of our period, especially Isocrates, is strong.

Of the elegists, Solon and Theognis are the most influential. The former accepted and refined Hesiod's antinomy between Hybris and Dike while Theognis, from a stubbornly conservative standpoint, and likewise deploring Hybris, and opposing to

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, *Ancilla* 21. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Beck, *Myth* viii and pp. 51-2

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* pp. 34-41.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* p. 35.

<sup>5</sup> Bacchylides Fr. 4 (trans. Jebb) in answer to Pindar's scorn of *μαθήτεες* and with a reminiscence of *Ol.* VI. 27.

it the twin virtues of *gnome* and *aidos*, addresses to Kyrnos practical and moral advice in the tradition of the *Works and Days*. Mythology plays but a small part in the elegists, for their gnomé teaching can be expressed directly.

## 18 DECAY OF THE MYTHOPOEIC MODE OF THOUGHT

By the time our period opens myth is becoming less indispensable as a vehicle of thought, and a prose writer like Thucydides can dispense with it altogether, treating the Homeric poems as history, which, as we have argued above, they originally were to a large extent. With the gradual growth of a philosophic vocabulary the mythopoeic process was no longer so essential – even Pindar is somewhat of an anachronism – but the texts of Homer, Hesiod and the other poets were still to remain the subject matter of elementary education. Children could scarcely understand their deepest meaning and apart from their obvious moral implications the myths could appeal to children as little more than pleasant (or unpleasant!) stories. On this level the attack by Plato, Isocrates and others can be more readily understood.

On the other hand the great philosophers of our period still employed mythology, though in a different way. Whereas Hesiod thought in the mythopoeic idiom, and teased his meaning from the existing myths, or invented new ones in the same tradition, Protagoras and Plato used mythic material to illustrate philosophic ideas. From Herodotos on, 'the myth tends to become an externalized form of thought'.<sup>1</sup> With these thoughts in mind we may now turn to consider the traditional practice of education in our period.

<sup>1</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists*, pp. 58-9.

# The Traditional Practice of Athenian Education

## 1 THE ORIGINS OF SCHOOLS

The art of teaching is of great antiquity and probably as old as human culture itself – for the existence of any art, skill or body of knowledge implies a teacher to transmit it. There is ample evidence in Homer of the skill of the Greeks in early times in such activities as shipbuilding, carpentry, metalwork, story-telling and poetry, all of which presuppose a long tradition and therefore the teaching of one generation by another. The importance attached to the art of teaching is attested by the fact that the gods themselves engaged in it: Artemis taught Scamandrius to hunt,<sup>1</sup> Athena taught Phereclus to make ships,<sup>2</sup> and Apollo taught Calchas to prophesy.<sup>3</sup>

Since, therefore, teaching is a necessary correlative of culture in its widest sense, it is of little value in a search for the origins of Athenian schools merely to establish the antiquity of the art. What we should seek is evidence of the beginnings of the salient aspects of the Athenian school system of our period.

Those aspects which seem quite essential to a definition of the schools of Athens are:

1. The education provided was cultural, not technical, directed towards character training and citizenship, not towards craftsmanship and personal profit.
2. The teacher was a professional taking more than one pupil and offering instruction to all who could afford it. In this sense he is to be opposed to the private tutor.

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* V. 51.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* V. 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* I. 72.

3. The instruction offered was given in some definite building or locality.

There is some hint of the origin of some of these elements in the development of the myth of Cheiron. Homer mentions the fact that Achilles was handed to Cheiron to 'rear'.<sup>1</sup> This implies that Cheiron was responsible for the complete education of Achilles including both the instruction in those skills which enabled him to take his place in the community and the supervision of his general character-development. It would therefore correspond to what in our period we mean by cultural education. But Cheiron was also a specialist in medicine,<sup>2</sup> an art which he taught Achilles. Hence in Cheiron are combined both cultural and technical instruction, though medicine was taught not so much as a craft to practise, as for its usefulness in battle.

By the time of Hesiod the tradition which ascribed to Cheiron virtual omniscience<sup>3</sup> and a practical monopoly of the art of teaching was already taking shape. He reared Jason,<sup>4</sup> Medeus (Jason's son)<sup>5</sup> and Achilles.<sup>6</sup> Hesiod makes no reference to his 'special subject' of medicine, but does exhibit an important development over the Homeric version in specifying a location for instruction – in woody Pelion.

In Homer and Hesiod it is fairly clear that the pupils spend the whole of their lives from infancy to maturity under Cheiron's care. In Pindar this fact is emphasized when he refers to Jason being handed to Cheiron while still in swaddling clothes.<sup>7</sup> According to Pindar, Cheiron even taught Asclepius<sup>8</sup> as well as Jason and Achilles.<sup>9</sup> Mythic chronology, of course, precluded the possibility of their being taught at the same time, and Pindar is at some pains to make this fact abundantly clear in the third *Nemean*:

The yellow-haired Achilles dwelling at first in the home of Philyra, being a child used to play at mighty deeds, often

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 16. 143 and Hesiod *Fr.* 96 49.

<sup>3</sup> cf. *Maxims of Cheiron*, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Hesiod, *Theog.* 1001.

<sup>7</sup> *P.* IV. 115.

<sup>8</sup> *P.* III. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* IV. 218 19, XI. 833.

<sup>4</sup> Hesiod, *Fr.* 19.

<sup>6</sup> Hesiod, *Fr.* 96. 49.

<sup>9</sup> *N.* III. 43 seq.

brandishing with his hands his javelin with short head, and like the winds in swiftness used in combat to work slaughter on the fierce lions, and used to slay wild boars, and bore their breathless bodies to the Centaur the son of Kronos; as soon as he was six years old, and so he did through all the after time: him would Artemis and the bold Athena look with marvel on, as he slew the stags without the aid of dogs and ensnaring nets; for he prevailed by swiftness of foot.

But I have to tell this tale told by those of former days; how that sage Cheiron reared Jason within his strong roof, and next Asclepius, whom he taught the soft-handed administration of remedies; and how that at another time he gave in marriage to Peleus Nereus' daughter with her fair fruits, and reared for her her mightiest offspring, nourishing his whole soul with all that was befitting; in order that, wafted by the sea-blasts of the winds beneath Troy, he might withstand the spear-clashing war-cry of the Lycians and Phrygians and Dardanians. . .<sup>1</sup>

Now, we shall shortly have occasion to note that the historical record implies the existence of schools in the sense of our definition about the time Pindar was writing. It may not be entirely fanciful to suggest that Pindar, being well aware of a growing educational trend of which he, as an aristocrat, disapproved, may have taken some pleasure in emphasizing the aristocratic nature of the tutoring of his mythic pupils, though the facts can equally well be accounted for by the inherent conservatism of mythology.

Cheiron's skill in medicine and his omniscience are emphasized in Pindar as in Homer and Hesiod. In the ninth *Pythian* even Apollo asks Cheiron's advice, when pondering how to treat Cyrene.<sup>2</sup>

In Pindar, too, the place of instruction is even more specific: it is now in Cheiron's cave.

The mythic tradition right down to Pindar, though in the main, it supports the notion of cultural education, does not go beyond the aristocratic notion of a private tutor engaged solely in the instruction and training of one pupil in every branch of

<sup>1</sup> N. III. 43 et seq. trans. Turner (Bohn's Cl. Lib.).

<sup>2</sup> P. IX. 31-41.

knowledge. The well-established mythic custom, attested not only in the Cheiron tradition, but also in the Phoenix version of Achilles' education and in the stories of Paris, Orestes, Oedipus and others, of sending the child away to the tutor instead of the tutor coming to live with the family<sup>1</sup> was no doubt an important influence on the formation of schools in our sense of the word. For the idea of allowing more than one pupil to come at once must have arisen at some time.

We shall now turn to consider what evidence there is for the establishment of schools in various parts of Greece.

The introduction of alphabetic writing into Greece was a necessary but not sufficient condition for the setting up of letter schools as the basis of elementary education. The Greeks were literate as early as the fifteenth century, but Linear B was not widely, if at all, known in the Dark Ages, and we are concerned here with the ordinary alphabetic script.

This derives from the Phoenician script which Ionian traders of the ninth and eighth centuries came to know through their commercial contacts with the Phoenicians.<sup>2</sup> The Phoenician script was syllabic, but the Greeks converted it into an alphabet by using the superfluous Phoenician letters for the vowels a e i and o, and by adding a character to represent u.<sup>3</sup> Wade-Gery maintains that the alphabet, as distinct from a syllabary, was invented to serve as a notation for Greek verse, for which purpose it would have had unique advantages.<sup>4</sup> This view is not universally accepted, but there does not seem to be any doubt that the alphabet was soon used to record literature.

The earliest extant example of alphabetic writing is on a pottery jug, decorated in the Athenian Geometric style and dated about 735 B.C.<sup>5</sup> Potsherds found at Mt Hymettos at Athens bear inscriptions containing dedications and imprecations.

<sup>1</sup> Though Phoenix later attended Achilles at the war.

<sup>2</sup> Forsdyke, *Greece before Homer* p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Handbk to Nicholson Museum (1st ed.) p. 200.

<sup>4</sup> Wade-Gery, *Poet* p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Forsdyke, *op. cit.* p. 19, dates it at 750 B.C., but this is probably too early (see Davidson, *Yale Classical Studies* 16, 1961, p. 129), cf. *Lustrum* Vol. 6, pp. 8 and 9.

These date from the beginning of the seventh century and 'attest the popular use of writing at Athens and its application in correct orthography to colloquial speech and trivial occasions before the end of the eighth century'.<sup>1</sup>

Forsdyke<sup>2</sup> suggests that the alphabet was adapted to Greek speech and literature by the efforts of temple priests and poet guilds. The control over the art exercised by such bodies may help to account for the early trend towards standardization<sup>3</sup> which culminated in the eventual acceptance in the fourth century of the Ionic characters as the common alphabet of Greece.<sup>4</sup>

The earliest surviving examples of alphabetic writing are quite naturally on pottery, stone or bronze. But perishable materials such as skin or papyrus were no doubt used for literary and other purposes and it is not surprising that these have not survived. Forsdyke suggests that a span of a hundred years should be allowed to account for the professional development of the script and its widespread popular use as attested by the pottery at the end of the eighth century.<sup>5</sup> This would accord more or less with the now generally accepted date of about 850 B.C. for the introduction of writing into Greece.<sup>6</sup>

The earliest teaching of letters would, therefore, have been carried on in the professional schools of poets and priests. They would have been taught purely as a technique, not as an element in a general, cultural education. The spread of the art, probably confined at first to the wealthy classes, may well have been effected through a system of private, individual tuition.

In all this there is no cogent evidence for the establishment of common elementary letter schools providing a general educa-

<sup>1</sup> Forsdyke, *op. cit.* p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Woodhead, *Study of Gk Inscriptions* p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Handbk to Nicholson Museum* p. 202.

<sup>5</sup> Forsdyke, *op. cit.* p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> There is a useful list of references to the archaeological evidence for the alphabet in Whitman, *Homer and the heroic tradition* p. 329, note 53.

tion for the main body of free-born children. Such evidence as there is for this is of a later date.

There is a strong tradition resting on very dubious authority that the Spartan poet Tyrtaeos was a lame Athenian school-master. If this were true we could assert the existence of schools in Athens as early as about 650 B.C. All that we can say with confidence, however, is that Plato thought Tyrtaeos to be an Athenian<sup>1</sup> and Pausanias that he taught at Athens.<sup>2</sup> It is of some interest for our purpose, however, to note that Pausanias evidently believed in the existence of schools at Athens in that period.

Solon made letters compulsory early in the sixth century and Peisistratos popularized letters, a fact which is probably connected with the growth of letter-schools.<sup>3</sup>

Between 508 and 507 ostracism was introduced at Athens by Cleisthenes. This presupposes the widespread knowledge of writing<sup>4</sup> among the whole citizen body and therefore the existence of schools for its instruction.

Pausanias mentions a school of sixty boys in Astypalaea in 496 B.C. Cleomedes was a famous athlete of Astypalaea, who in a combat at Olympia killed one of his opponents with his fist. Because of this accident he was deprived of the prize, became delirious and on his return to Astypalaea he entered a school, pulled down the pillars supporting the roof and crushed to death sixty boys.<sup>5</sup>

In 494 B.C. the roof fell in on children as they were being taught letters in Chios, so that of a hundred children only one survived. The story is told in Herodotos.<sup>6</sup>

In 480 B.C. the Troizenians provided schools for their Athenian guests, a fact which shows the importance attached to schooling even in times of dire crisis.<sup>7</sup>

Aristophanes in the *Clouds*<sup>8</sup> refers to the ancient education of

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Laws* 629 a; cf. Rose, *Handbk of Gk Lit.* p. 84 note.

<sup>2</sup> Pausanias, IV. 15. 6 and schol. on *Laws* 629 a.

<sup>3</sup> Freeman, *Schools* p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> Forsdyke, *Greece before Homer* p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Pausanias, VI. 9. 6.

<sup>6</sup> VI. 27.

<sup>7</sup> Plutarch, *Them.* 10.

<sup>8</sup> *Clouds* 961 seq. (trans Rogers).



his childhood and of attendance at the kitharistes' school; this takes us back well into the fifth century B.C.:

'To hear, then, prepare, of the Discipline rare  
which flourished in Athens of yore,  
When Honour and Truth were in fashion with youth  
and Sobriety bloomed on our shore;  
First of all the old rule was preserved in our school  
that boys "should be seen and not heard":  
And then to the home of the Harpist would come  
decorous in action and word  
All the lads of one town, though the snow peppered down  
in spite of all wind and all weather: . . .'

Thucydides refers to the massacre by Thracian mercenaries in the pay of Athens of all the boys in a school at Mykalessos in 413 B.C.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that this is one of the earliest uses of that strangely rare word 'didaskaleion' in the sense of *school*.<sup>2</sup>

From the above evidence it is clear that schools were well established in many parts of Greece at least as early as the end of the sixth century. The existence of ostracism establishes the existence of writing schools in the sixth century. It is, however, important to note that in none of our available evidence are schools mentioned for their own sake – they are either to be deduced from some other fact, or they are mentioned as incidental elements of some startling event or some national crisis. No writer of classical times bothered to write for us a history of schools. They are only mentioned in the historians because they chanced to be relevant to the events narrated. The same may be said of many other aspects of Athenian life and culture. It is likely that schools were so much a part of the regular pattern of life that their existence was taken for granted as something not calling for special mention. As they were not State-endowed they would not be the subject of public debate.

<sup>1</sup> Thuc. VII. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Early occurrences are: Soph. *Fr.* 799; Antiphon 142. 33; Thuc. VII. 29; and in Plato.

The argument from silence is therefore not to be applied too rigidly.

The intensity of the nature-nurture controversy that raged in such writers as Pindar and Simonides may have been due to the growing prominence of the schools and the consequent widespread availability of education, of which the aristocracy had formerly held the monopoly. Indeed, Marrou argues that it was the pressure of this social need for general education that created the school.<sup>1</sup> Pindar's scorn of the *μαθόντες* indicates that the parvenus were having their sons taught the techniques of the Eupatridae.

It is important to bear in mind that this old aristocratic education, the encroachment on which Pindar so bitterly resented, consisted not of a training in letters and literature as such, but of a preparation for the aristocratic way of life. This was a life of leisure in which physical activity, games and chariot-racing were the chief day-time diversions, while in the evenings their cultural life centred round the men's club, in which song played a prominent part. As the myrtle bough was passed around each person would be expected to provide a verse of a scolion. Other forms of entertainment consisted of recitations from Homer or the Elegists with their strong didactic tone; or on special occasions the victories of the contestants in the various games, great and small, would be celebrated in an epinikion written by a Pindar, a Simonides or a Bacchylides. For such a life letters, though useful, were no sufficient preparation. The embryonic aristocrat needed and received a thorough training in the palaestra and the lyre-school. That is why Aristophanes in his nostalgic references to the Old Education makes no mention of letters, and emphasizes above all else the physical education they received. That, too, is why Pindar, when expressing his profound indignation at the *μαθόντες*, is thinking of their encroachment, not in the field of letters, but in the hitherto jealously guarded preserves of the aristocracy – physical and lyrical education. For he saw that the dilution of the aristocratic culture must lead to its ultimate vulgarization

<sup>1</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 39-40.

and extinction. The demand for letters was due more to the growth of trade in the sixth and fifth centuries and the consequent necessity for skill in keeping records and accounts. Success depended on literacy, but as has happened at other periods of history, when the lower classes began to receive education, they demanded the same type of education that the nobles had enjoyed, whether relevant to their needs or not. This had a two-fold effect – the aristocratic culture became diversified, universalized and vulgarized. But at the same time the newer, more utilitarian study, that of letters, became affected by the aristocratic ideals and methods and was taught, not as a technique, but as a discipline. Letters were taught in conjunction with and by means of the study of Homer and the other great poets, apart from the lyrists. The demand for letters thus became engulfed in the current of general, cultural education instead of promoting the growth of scribe schools and a scribe class.

The school as we know it in the classical period as a means of providing, in separate compartments, the three types of education for the whole citizen body was thus created by the social pressures engendered by the rise of democracy and the commercial pressures of increasing trade, reacting with the already existing aristocratic tradition of education. The school, by cheapening education, made its spread possible in a way that the older tutorial method could not do. But the group method of education was not the invention of democracy; for, judging from Aristophanes, the young nobles of an earlier period were taught in schools. Indeed, it is inconceivable that the idea of class instruction had not occurred fairly early in the growth of education. It is almost certain that the method of group instruction was already at hand to cater for the demand for universal education.

## 2 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

The ordinary elementary education of the Athenian boy consisted of three, and in some cases four, divisions, each taught by a separate master. The three main divisions were Grammar,

Music and Physical Education, which were regarded by the Athenians, though not by Plato, as a complete education in virtue.<sup>1</sup> To these three divisions was sometimes added Painting and Drawing. In the mythic tradition it was more usual for one master to teach everything.

Athenian education was not compulsory. It was available at a price, to those who could afford it, in amount and quality according to the parents' means. The children of the wealthy began earlier and finished later. This fact has some bearing on the question whether the divisions of education were taught concurrently or in sequence. When the ancient authorities make reference to the education of boys, they usually mention the three branches, but not invariably in the same order. The commonest order is: Grammatistes, Kitharistes, Paidotribes. The famous passage in the *Protagoras* which deals with education mentions them in this order, and might lend itself to the interpretation of a sequence in education, though the passage

After this, they send him to school, with a strict charge to the master to pay far greater heed to the good behaviour of the children than to their progress in reading and music.

supports the view that the subjects were learnt concurrently.<sup>2</sup> Further, if we argue from the *Protagoras* for a sequence we get the order: letters, music, gymnastic.<sup>3</sup> Yet this conflicts with Aristophanes<sup>4</sup> where music and gymnastic on the one hand are set in opposition to philosophy on the other, implying that at the age when philosophy was taught music and gymnastic were learnt concurrently.

The evidence of Xenophon, though likewise not completely unequivocal, seems to support the view of concurrent learning of the three branches:

In the other Greek States parents who profess to give their sons the best education place their boys under the care and control of a moral tutor . . . as soon as they can understand

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Clitopho* 407 c.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 325; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library ed. p. 252).

<sup>3</sup> *Protag.* 326.

<sup>4</sup> *Clouds* 960 seq.

what is said to them, and send them to a school to learn letters, music, and the exercises of the wrestling ground.<sup>1</sup>

The evidence of the vases points to the same conclusion. The most famous educational scene is on the Douris cup<sup>2</sup> which shows lessons in progress in both music and letters. We need not infer from this that these lessons were given in the same room at the same time. The scene is obviously stylized and is meant to represent lessons going on in the school and implies at the least that these lessons were given in the same establishment. There is no apparent difference between the ages of the pupils studying music and those learning letters, and in both cases they are meant to be young teenagers. If they look a little older than this, it is because the Greek vase painters had not learnt to represent natural-looking children.

The Splanchnopt cup<sup>3</sup> illustrates a music lesson in progress. In the field above there are, in addition to two purses and a lyre, a writing tablet, a cross-shaped object which may possibly have been a measuring instrument,<sup>4</sup> and a strigil. These objects serve to remind us of the other two branches of education available to boys, namely, letters and physical education.

Such scenes are fairly common in vase paintings and reinforce the view that the three branches of education were offered concurrently.<sup>5</sup>

Aristophanes in his references to the Old Education contrasts the advantages of the training provided by the kitharist and the gymnastic teachers with that offered by Socrates and the sophists, and does not mention the grammarist at all. Now the fact that he is ridiculing the literary and philosophical education of his time indicates that he is referring to a stage or, at any rate, an age beyond that reached by the training of the grammarist. In other words, he is not criticizing the elementary

(<sup>1</sup> Xen. *Const. Lac.* ii. 1; trans. Marchant (Loeb Cl. Lib.).

<sup>2</sup> See plates 4-5 and no. 38 of List of Monuments.

<sup>3</sup> See plate 9. See also its publication by Professor A. D. Trendall in Trendall, *The Felton Greek Vases*.

<sup>4</sup> Trendall, *op. cit.* p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> cf. Freeman, *Schools*, p. 52.

literary education but the more advanced, or secondary, studies of a literary or philosophical nature. He implies, too, that these studies competed with those of the gymnastic and music teachers. From all this we can safely argue that at the *secondary* stage the lyre-school and gymnastic education proceeded concurrently, together with but partly in competition with the advanced studies of Socrates and the sophists.

If the three types of studies were concurrent at the secondary stage, it follows that the foundation studies on which they were based would have been taught concurrently too.

Plato, however, in the *Laws*,<sup>1</sup> recommends that lyre-playing should begin at thirteen and continue for three years. Now, although Plato frequently reflects current practice, it is never certain when he is literally taking it over or adapting or improving it. Plato's whole theory of education is based on the idea of assigning to each age a specific form of study and much of his originality rests on this fact. It is likely that in his treatment of lyre-playing he is not reproducing current practice but adapting it to his own use.

The evidence, then, seems to support the theory of concurrent<sup>2</sup> training in all three branches. But as each parent was free to purchase just the amount and type of education he desired – subject, of course, to social pressures – and as there was ample time for the boy to master what to us seems a none too full curriculum, even Plato allowing three years for each of the learning disciplines,<sup>3</sup> – it is likely that variations from case to case both in the sequence of studies and the rate of progress were common. It is also likely that since training in sport and music were more firmly rooted in the aristocratic tradition of education than the comparatively late subject of letters, the wealthy nobles would insist firmly on their sons being trained in these arts as well as letters, that the wealthy parvenus would do likewise to ape the nobles, and that the poor would have to be satisfied with the more strictly useful art of letters.

<sup>1</sup> *Laws* 810 a.

<sup>2</sup> Margou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 148, takes the 'concurrent' view.

<sup>3</sup> *Laws* 810 a.

This contention is borne out by the fact that the humble sausage-seller in Aristophanes *Knights*<sup>1</sup> knows his letters, but has had no training in music or gymnastics. Plato's conception of an absolute dunce is 'one who knows neither his letters or how to swim',<sup>2</sup> implying that anyone at all ought at least to know his letters. Kleon in the *Knights*<sup>3</sup> is represented as an utter boor but he has at least attended a lyre-school. From this we can see that the irreducible minimum of education in the late fifth century was a knowledge of letters. Further proof of the universality of the knowledge of letters is afforded by Euripides' 'Theseus' puzzle which no doubt Euripides expected his audience to appreciate from their knowledge of letters.<sup>4</sup> People not regarded as particularly well-educated would also have had some training in the lyre-school.

Since these standards are minima, it follows that the general pattern of education would embrace a reasonable standard in letters and music together with some gymnastic training. The action of the Troizenians, mentioned above, in providing schooling for the Athenian boys, implies that education among the Athenians was fairly universal and regarded as of great importance. The low pay of the schoolmasters, while seemingly inconsistent with the importance attached to education, is a further proof of the universality of education. Then, as now, universal education depended on its cheapness.

The fact that parents could select what suited them from the available education is further suggested by the fact that some parents provided some part of the training by home instruction. This is attested by Xenophon in the *Memorabilia*:

Nor does it satisfy the parents merely to feed their offspring, but as soon as the children appear capable of learning anything, they teach them whatever they know that may be of use for their conduct in life; and whatever they consider another more capable of communicating than themselves, they send their sons to him at their own expense, and take care to adopt

<sup>1</sup> 1235-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Laws* 689 d.

<sup>3</sup> 987-96.

<sup>4</sup> *Fr.* 385 (Nauck).

every course that their children may be as much improved as possible.<sup>1</sup>

### 3 THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS

This home instruction was in many instances the only education provided for girls; apart from their learning of household arts such as cooking, weaving, spinning and so forth, we know very little about the general education of girls. Freeman<sup>2</sup> states that the girls' mothers would have been incapable of giving them a literary or musical education. Yet we know<sup>3</sup> that women attended the theatre and were expected to appreciate the plays, which require for their understanding a thorough knowledge of mythology; hence many of them must have learnt their mythology at home, and where else but from a study of the poets? There are bits of evidence that men did carry on intelligent conversations with their wives which would have been impossible unless the latter had some degree of education.<sup>4</sup> But for the exact form of this education we have little evidence.

It is usually thought that all girls received their education at home. But the archaeological record, scant though it is, seems to point to a different conclusion. There is a fifth-century vase painting 'showing a girl, rather large, led by a woman who is pointing the way. That they are going to school is apparent from the reluctance with which she goes.'<sup>5</sup> There is also a 'rather chubby little girl in terracotta . . . holding her tablet in her right hand, and a purse containing her astragals in her left'.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.* II. ii. 6; trans. Watson (Everyman's Library).

<sup>2</sup> *Schools*, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Norwood, *Gk Tragedy* pp. 80-81; Kitto, *The Greeks* p. 233.

<sup>4</sup> cf. Kitto, *op. cit.* p. 227, for the evidence of the Neaira passage and men's conversation with women re jury business. For a full discussion see Kitto, *op. cit.* pp. 219-36; Seltman, C., *Women in Antiquity* (Pan ed.) pp. 93 seq.; Gomme, A. W., *Essays in Gk hist. and lit.* pp. 89 seq.; and for a different view Zimmern, A., *The Gk Commonwealth* pp. 333-43.

<sup>5</sup> Klein, *Child life in Gk art* p. 29 and pl. 29b.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* p. 29 and pl. 28a. This object, however, is later than our period.



There are great gaps in both the literary and the archaeological evidence for Greek education and it is curious how in some areas the one complements the other without that overlap which would yield confirmation. The point is well made by Anita Klein:

While literature offers us numerous references to the training of girls in the domestic arts, there is very little concerning school work for them. Archaeology, on the other hand, provides illustrations of girls reading and writing, or going to school, while we look in vain for domestic education.<sup>1</sup>

A pottery dice-box by the Sotades painter, dated about 460 B.C., shows young girls learning to dance under the instruction of a dwarf dancing-master. This is evidently group instruction and would no doubt have been given in the dancing-master's school.<sup>2</sup> If dancing instruction was taken away from home, it is not impossible that other lessons may have been given by group instruction in schools.

From the above evidence it is clear that at least some girls attended school outside the home.

This conclusion is strengthened by what little we know of girls' athletics. The myth of Atalanta represents the ideal of feminine athleticism and she is the female counterpart of Heracles and Theseus.<sup>3</sup> 'The important point', remarks Seltman,<sup>4</sup> 'is that you only evolve, embroider, and recite legends about an imaginary athlete heroine because your civilization affords some scope for young females to be athletic.' Atalanta was famed as huntress, wrestler and foot-runner. A painting inside an Attic cup<sup>5</sup> shows her dressed in brassiere and shorts, holding an umpire's rod, and standing beside a winning post, above which hang an oil-flask and a strigil (or scraper). She is

<sup>1</sup> Klein, Anita, *Child life in Gk art* p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Plate XXI in Seltman, C., *Women in Antiquity* (Thames and Hudson imprint) cf. Klein, Anita, op. cit. p. 32. See Plates 16-17, and no. 224 of List of Monuments.

<sup>3</sup> Seltman, C., op. cit. p. 121 (Pan ed.).

<sup>4</sup> ib. p. 122 (Pan ed.).

<sup>5</sup> By the Euaion painter, c. 440 B.C. See Seltman, C., op. cit. Plate 8 of *Pan ed.*

dressed, not for running, however, but for wrestling, an activity which is depicted on a much earlier cup by Oltos.<sup>1</sup> We have little evidence from other sources about girls' wrestling, but it is known that provision was made at Olympia for competition between girl foot-runners.<sup>2</sup> These games were called the Heraea, and are described in Pausanias.<sup>3</sup> There were three age groups corresponding to the modern division into juvenile, junior and senior. They ran with their hair hanging down, wearing a *chiton* reaching to a little above the knee and leaving the right shoulder bare to just below the breast. Apart from the actual prize, the winners were allowed to dedicate statues of themselves, with their names inscribed upon them.

A late Roman copy of one such statue has survived and corresponds to the description given by Pausanias of the girl athletes. The statue is dated about 430 B.C. and is Peloponnesian work.<sup>4</sup> The girl runner is no doubt a Spartan. However, palaestra girls are not uncommon on Greek vases, and are found both in Athens and in South Italy, based, as Seltman points out, on the representations of Atalanta. There can be little doubt that girls played a minor part in athletics elsewhere than at Sparta, but there does not seem to be any specific evidence for or against the possibility of Athenian girls competing in the festivals. But the fact that there was some scope for Athenian girls to engage in athletics presupposes some system of training, which must have been undertaken outside the home.

The evidence of Plato, however, seems at first sight to discourage belief in girls' athletics at Athens. In the fifth book of the *Republic* Plato proposes to educate girls along with boys and in the same disciplines:

Then, if we are to set women to the same tasks as men, we

<sup>1</sup> Cup by Oltos, Attic, c. 520 B.C. See Seltman, C., op. cit. Plate 9 of Pan ed.

<sup>2</sup> Seltman, C., op. cit. p. 123 (Pan ed.).

<sup>3</sup> Pausanias V, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Seltman, C., op. cit. p. 124 and Plate 16 of Pan ed. cf. Gardiner, E. N., *Gk athletic sports and festivals* p. 47.

must teach them the same things. They must have the same two branches of training for mind and body and also be taught the art of war, and they must receive the same treatment.

That seems to follow.

Possibly, if these proposals were carried out, they might be ridiculed as involving a good many breaches of custom.

They might indeed.

The most ridiculous – don't you think – being the notion of women exercising naked along with the men in the wrestling-schools. . . .

Yes, that would be thought laughable, according to our present notions.<sup>1</sup>

This proposition is put forward as something quite revolutionary and therefore at variance with current practice. But it should be noted that physical training is treated as parallel with intellectual training, and the revolutionary nature of the proposal is not necessarily the teaching of these two disciplines to girls, but their training in these subjects on a completely equal footing and in the same schools as the boys. If the passage is taken to exclude girls from gymnastics it would likewise exclude them from letters and music.

That some girls went to school and that some participated in athletic exercises is borne out by the extant evidence, but it is quite uncertain how widespread these practices were. That a girl of good family might not be able to read and write is suggested by the fact that Iphigeneia in the *Iphigeneia among the Taurians* of Euripides<sup>2</sup> has to get a captive to write her letter for her. But whether girls were educated within or outside the home, there can be little doubt that their education was not universally neglected.

#### 4 BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT

About the physical conditions under which letters were taught we are not well informed. In the reference that Herodotos<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Repub.* 451 c-452 b; trans. Cornford.

<sup>2</sup> Il. 584 seq.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 77 above.

makes to this type of school he merely states that 'the roof fell in on boys as they were being taught', so that we are left in doubt whether the instruction was being given in a building specially designed as a school, or whether in some other building, public or private, hired or otherwise made available for the purpose. Thucydides' reference to the massacre at Mykalessos specifically mentions a 'school' (*διδασκαλείω*). The important fact which emerges from the references previously quoted<sup>1</sup> is that the numbers seem to range from sixty to one hundred and twenty. We cannot be sure that these are paralleled at Athens, nor do we know how many teachers were employed, but from Demosthenes' reference to Aischines' helping his father in the school of Elpias<sup>2</sup> it is fairly certain that there were at least one or two assistants.

The furniture does not seem to have been very elaborate, consisting of chairs for the masters and stools for the pupils and *paidagogoi*. There were no desks, the pupils writing with tablet resting on knees. Other equipment such as ink, rulers and so forth seems to have been provided.

We have already suggested that letters and music were normally taught in the same establishment. As the lyre-school preceded the letter-school historically it seems likely that the former answered the growing demand for instruction in letters by including the new subject in its curriculum. This would have been a happy conjunction since both courses included a substantial literary element. The lyre-master taught not only music but also the works of the lyric poets.<sup>3</sup> The grammatistes, after teaching the alphabet and the art of writing, advanced his pupils to the study of the gnomic and epic poets. In this regard it is interesting to note that the Douris cup shows a master holding in his hands a scroll containing a fragment of a lost epic poem.

It is also possible that the early scribe-schools of poets and priests<sup>4</sup> may have opened their doors to lay pupils for instruction

<sup>1</sup> See p. 77 above.

<sup>2</sup> Demosth. *Crown* 270 and 313.

<sup>3</sup> Aristoph., *Clouds* 963-1013; Plat. *Protag.* 326 b.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 76 above.

in letters, thus providing an avenue for learning letters for purely utilitarian purposes independently of the lyre-schools.

Since parents exercised a free choice over the subjects they might wish their sons to be taught, and since the study of letters would have received priority over that of music, it is not improbable that in some cases the two functions of the lyre-school became separated and that letters and literature were sometimes taught in schools not providing musical instruction, while some lyre-schools may not have offered letters. A passage in Lucian, to be quoted later in another connection,<sup>1</sup> seems to imply the separation of the two schools, but, of course, he refers to a much later period.

The paidotribes required much more elaborate buildings and surroundings and his instruction was necessarily given in a separate location. Although sophists and others might make use of some parts of the palaestrae for sporadic instruction, it is unlikely that regular elementary school classes were held there.

Thus a pupil might attend two or even three different schools for the full range of instruction. These schools took their names either from the Principal Teacher or from their location.<sup>2</sup> Likewise private palaestrae were named after their proprietors.

The paidotribes taught in a palaestra. Xenophon refers to the 'many palaestrae which the democracy built for itself',<sup>3</sup> which Freeman interprets to mean that there were many public palaestrae available for the general public to use for training. Probably these were available for use by paidotribai or even by sophists to give secondary instruction to older boys; such as the one in which Micyrus the sophist was teaching at the beginning of the *Lysis*.<sup>4</sup> Socrates was a frequent visitor at the palaestrae to engage the youth in conversation. The palaestra which is the scene of the *Charmides* is evidently a private one belonging to Taureas.

It is necessary to distinguish the palaestra from the gym-

<sup>1</sup> p. 99 below.

<sup>2</sup> Pauly-Wissowa, article on *Schulen*.

<sup>3</sup> *Const. Ath.* ii. 10; cf. Freeman, *Schools* p. 125.

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Lysis* 204.

nasium, the latter being an elaborate public place for large scale exercises and competitions.<sup>1</sup>

An essential feature of the gymnasium was a running track; a public palaestra was normally included among the facilities. But palaestrae could also exist independently of the gymnasium; they were essentially wrestling schools, or small training areas for other sports. In their simplest form they consisted of an open square with a building containing facilities for undressing and washing. Provision might also be made for the playing of ball games either in a special room or in the court yard.<sup>2</sup> The boys stripped for their exercises, which were always performed naked. The actual exercise ground was exposed to the open air above, was surrounded by columns, and had a floor of sand. Pick-axes were provided to dig up the sandy soil to make it soft. All equipment necessary for the exercises was provided, such as punch-balls, halteres, scrapers, boxing cords, javelins and so forth. The paidotribes himself carried a forked stick as the symbol of his office. A flute-player was in attendance to provide the music necessary for the timing of the exercises.<sup>3</sup>

## 5 CONDITIONS OF SCHOOLING

The Athens of Pericles [says Zimmern<sup>4</sup>] paid no attention whatever to her children (who did not indeed become hers till they reached their eighteenth year) and provided no national schoolmasters except the citizens who drilled the recruits.

The national training of the Ephebic years was compulsory because war was almost the natural state among the Greeks, and was even, as Zimmern suggests,<sup>5</sup> looked on as good sport and occupied a large proportion of everyday conversation. This

<sup>1</sup> Handbk to Nicholson Museum p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> See article 'Palaestra' in Pauly-Wissowa, and Gardiner, F. N., *Gk athletic sports and festivals* pp. 463 and 468.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Freeman, *Schools* p. 127 *et alibi*, and the illustrations from vases which he reproduces. See also pp. 118, 128 and for pick-axes Plate VIA. See also List of Monuments in Appendix of this book.

<sup>4</sup> *Gk Commonwealth* p. 295.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* p. 345.

was the reason, according to Zimmern, why Thucydides devotes so much space to details of campaigns. But whether it was good sport or not, it is certain that the outcome of war meant life or death to the community, and it was but natural that military training should be compulsory.

Solon is supposed to have enacted a law that every boy should learn swimming and letters.<sup>1</sup> In the *Crito* Plato personifies the laws thus:

Then perhaps you find fault with the laws for the bringing-up of children and their education, the education that was given to you? Did we not do right then, we who have been set over this, when we bade your father bring you up, to exercise your body and cultivate your mind?<sup>2</sup>

This would seem like a reference to laws compelling parents to educate their children in music and gymnastics; but both Freeman<sup>3</sup> and Marrou<sup>4</sup> assert that Plato is here thinking of unwritten laws or customs. This is a likely explanation, yet there remains the difficulty that in the *Crito* passage there are many references to the type of thing that we would strongly expect to be the subject of actual legislation (though custom would also be involved), for example:

Do you imagine that a city can stand and not be overthrown, when the decisions of the judges have no power, when they are made of no effect and destroyed by private persons.<sup>5</sup>

and again the reference to execution:

If we mean to kill you because we think it just.<sup>6</sup>

and:

Only if he stays with us after seeing how we judge our cases and how we rule our city, then we hold that he has pledged himself by his action to do our bidding.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, *Schools* p. 57, refers to Petit, *Leges Atticae* ii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Crito* 50 d; trans. Stawell (Everyman's Library).

<sup>3</sup> *Schools* p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> *Hist. Educ.* p. 382.

<sup>5</sup> *Crito* 50 b; trans. Stawell (Everyman's Library).

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* 51 a.

<sup>7</sup> *ib.* 51 c.

These passages do appear to deal with topics of actual legislation and lend support to the theory that the 'Laws' regarding education are in a similar category, though it is possible that Plato used the word *nomoi* in two different senses. In any event, it is implied that the force of custom, if not of law, and of social pressure was so strong as to amount almost to actual compulsion for parents to give children at least some education.

The *Crito* passages must, however, be set beside a passage in the *Alcibiades*:

But about your birth, Alcibiades, or nurture, or education, or about those of any other Athenian, one may say that nobody cares, unless it be some lover that you chance to have.<sup>1</sup>

This seems to imply a certain indifference on the part of the State to the method of bringing up children.

Aischines refers to the Laws of Solon dealing with education:<sup>2</sup>

The old lawgivers stated expressly what sort of life the free boy ought to lead and how he ought to be brought up; they also dealt with the manners of the lads and men of other ages. In the case of the schoolmasters, to whom we are compelled to entrust our children, although their livelihood depends upon their good character, and bad behaviour is ruinous to them, yet the lawgiver obviously distrusts them. For he expressly states, first, the hour at which the free boys ought to go to school; secondly, how many other boys are to be present in the school; and then at what hour he is to leave. He forbids the schoolmasters to open their schools and the paidotribai their palaestrai before sunrise, and orders them to close before sunset, being very suspicious of the empty streets and of the darkness. Then he dealt with the boys who attended schools, as to who they should be and of what ages; and with the official who is to oversee these matters. He dealt, too, with the regulation of the paidagogoi, and with the festival of the Muses in the schools, and of Hermes in the palaestrai. Finally he laid down regulations about the joint attendance of the boys and the round of dithyrambic dances; for he directed that the choregos should be over forty. No one

<sup>1</sup> *Alc.* I. 122 b; trans. Lamb (Loeb Cl. Lib.).

<sup>2</sup> *Ag. Tim.* 9; trans. Freeman, *Schools* pp. 68-9.



over the age of boyhood might enter while the boys were in school, except the son, brother, or son-in-law of the master: the penalty of infringing this regulation was death. At the festival of Hermes the person in charge of the gymnasium<sup>1</sup> was not to allow any one over age to accompany the boys in any way: unless he excluded such persons from the gymnasium, he was to come under the law of corrupting free boys.

These laws deal mainly with moral supervision – even the hours of opening and closing are fixed with a view to protecting the boys from exposure to moral dangers in the dark. The restriction on the ages of those attending, on the age of the choregos, and the complete prohibition on adults entering the school while the class was in progress are all directed against the dangers of pederasty: it should be noted, however, that from abundant scenes in Plato and elsewhere the prohibition on adults entering the school was disregarded in classical times; which indicates either that the laws are apocryphal or that they had fallen into desuetude. At any rate there is nothing in the text, even as it stands, to compel a pupil to attend school.

The evidence concerning compulsory school attendance is therefore inconclusive, but the general trend of informed opinion is that though attendance was not legally compulsory, yet some form of elementary education was practically universal.

## 6 STATE ENCOURAGEMENT

But if the state did not compel education, it did encourage it by such means as public competitions. Already as early as the seventh century children's competitions made their appearance at the Olympic Games, giving recognition to the existence, and encouragement to the practice, of physical education; though there is some doubt as to the age group covered by 'children's' events.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Freeman asserts that this law was totally neglected in Socratic Athens.

<sup>2</sup> See Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 40; also footnote 10 where he refers to Paus. V, 9, 9 and Philostr. *Gym.* 13; and Additional Note 3 (p. 368) where he refers to Gardiner; cf. Freeman, *Schools* p. 63.

In our own period competitions in literary excellence are authenticated by the evidence of Plato. In the *Timaeus*<sup>1</sup> Critias says:

and it chanced to be that day of the Apaturia which is called 'Cureotis'. The ceremony for boys which was always customary at the feast was held also on that occasion, our fathers arranging contests in recitation. So while many poems of many poets were declaimed, since the poems of Solon were at that time new, many of us children chanted them.

## 7 COMMENCING AGE

Aristotle in the *Politics*<sup>2</sup> recommends that the boy should commence his education at home at the age of five and implies that attendance at school should not commence till seven; Plato in the *Laws* recommends six, while the *Axiochos*<sup>3</sup> suggests that the pupils of the grammatastae and paidotribai began at seven. Xenophon puts them to school 'as soon as they begin to understand'.<sup>4</sup> Since, according to Plato in the *Protagoras*, the wealthy begin earliest and finish latest, we may safely assume that the variations in commencing age in the actual practice of the time accord with the different recommendations of the theorists, ranging from five to seven.

## 8 LEAVING AGE

There are two passages especially relevant to this question. In the *Laches*<sup>5</sup> Plato states:

Well, we have resolved to give them our most consistent care, and not – as most fathers do when their boys begin to be young men<sup>6</sup> – let them run loose as their fancy leads them, but begin forthwith taking every possible care of them.

<sup>1</sup> *Tim.* 21 b; trans. Bury (Loeb Cl. Lib.).

<sup>2</sup> *Pol.* VII. 1336.

<sup>3</sup> 361 d.

<sup>4</sup> *Const. Lac.* II. 1.

<sup>5</sup> 179 a; trans. Lamb (Loeb Cl. Lib.).

<sup>6</sup> *Meirakia*: a term applied to youths from 15 to 21.

In the *Constitution of Lacedaemon*<sup>1</sup> Xenophon says:

When a boy ceases to be a child (παῖς) others release him from his moral tutor and his schoolmaster; he is then no longer under a ruler and is allowed to go his own way. [Lycurgus on the other hand imposed on him a ceaseless round of work.]

Both the passages are referring to the transition in age from child (παῖς) to young man (μειράκιον) and raise the question of the proper occupation of a youth of that age. It is clear that this transition marks the end of normal attendance at the elementary schools.

Similarly in the palaestrae clear distinctions are made between the classes of 'boys' and 'youths', the two terms marking the distinction between elementary and secondary instruction.<sup>2</sup>

## 9 THE ROUTINE OF THE SCHOOL DAY

About the way in which the schoolboy's time-table was arranged we have no really conclusive evidence for our period. From the Solonic laws quoted in Aischines<sup>3</sup> we can deduce that school did not open before sunrise nor continue after sunset – but this does not really tell us much.

The evidence of the *Protagoras*<sup>4</sup> is inconclusive, for though it mentions the schools in the order Letters, Music, Gymnastics, this is not meant to set out the day's time-table but rather to indicate the child's educational course. For the passage commences with infancy and concludes with adulthood: on this view the sequence is logical, for though historically letters came last, yet they lend themselves to elementary instruction at an earlier age than either music or gymnastics. The *Protagoras* passage, therefore, contributes little to our knowledge of the daily routine.

Freeman, relying on the evidence of Lucian,<sup>5</sup> a writer of the

<sup>1</sup> III. 1; trans. Marchant (Loeb Cl. Lib.).

<sup>2</sup> e.g. Plato, *Lysis* 206 d.

<sup>4</sup> 325-6.

<sup>3</sup> See above p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> *Am.* 44-5; *Paras.* 61.

second century A.D., states that the day began with letters followed by gymnastics, then a bath and a meal, then letters again before returning home again in the evening. Such late evidence, however, is of little value for our period, unless we can prove a long tradition of unbroken practice. Marrou<sup>1</sup> refers to evidence from the *Bacchides* of Plautus which derives from Menander's *Double-Deceiver*:

Ante solem exorientem nisi in palaestram veneras,  
Gymnasi praefecto haud mediocris poenas penderes. (v. 424-5) [If you had not reached the palaestra before sunrise, the master of the gymnasium would punish you severely.]

and:

Inde de hippodromo et palaestra ubi revenisses domum,  
Cincticulo praeinctus in sella apud magistrum adsideres:  
Cum librum legeres, si unam peccavisses syllabam  
Fieret corium tam maculosum quam est nutricis pallium.  
(v. 431-4) [Then when you had returned home from the hippodrome and the palaestra, girt with a little girdle, you would sit on a chair before the master: when you read the book, if you had made a mistake in a single syllable, your flogged back would be marked like a nurse's cloak.]

This passage would seem to indicate that in the time of Menander the gymnastic lesson came first, taking up the whole morning. After lunch at home the reading lesson was given in the afternoon. To account for the difference as reported by Lucian, Marrou<sup>2</sup> suggests that with the growing importance of letters an additional lesson was added first thing in the morning, until with the passage of time physical education began to be of minor importance. The practice of Menander's time, of course, is still not sound evidence for our period but it is reasonable to assume, for want of other evidence, that a similar practice prevailed a little earlier. In the Plautus passage there is no mention of the lyre-school, which by Menander's time was beginning to diminish in importance, though this would not have been so in the earlier part of our period.

<sup>1</sup> p. 397.

<sup>2</sup> p. 398.

It is convenient at this point to remind the reader that pupils began school at ages varying from five to seven. Further, it is a possible interpretation of the *Protagoras* passage<sup>1</sup> that pupils learnt letters first, then the lyre, then gymnastics. It has also already been suggested that parents exercised great freedom in the selection of their sons' educational courses, and that since education was not compulsory the amount, type and quality varied according to the parents' means or wishes. From this it follows that the school routine may not have been so rigid or so clear-cut as our secondary authorities endeavour to establish. Private tuition no doubt still persisted – at any rate a little later Aristotle makes reference to the comparative advantages of the private system of instruction, especially in relation to medicine:

Then, furthermore, Private training has advantages over Public, as in the case of the healing art . . . it would seem, then, that the individual will be most exactly attended to under Private care, because so each will be more likely to obtain what is expedient for him.<sup>2</sup>

The field of selection open to parents was wide indeed.

But this very fact of selection raises difficult questions concerning the routine of the school day. If, for example, the parents decide that the boy is to concentrate mainly on letters, what does he do during the rest of the day? If it is possible for pupils to commence at varying ages, how is the complication of time-tabling for all the different standards and stages overcome in the restricted period of the day? Further, if the teacher of letters gave lessons only in the afternoon, how did he fill in the morning? How did he make it pay, his fees being so low, on half a day's work? I do not presume to be able to answer these questions, but I am endeavouring to make the point that the school time-table may not have been a rigid one, applying without exception to all. For example, those taking only one subject, or two, would, by the very omission of a course, be breaking the routine. We have already quoted evidence that

<sup>1</sup> 325-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Nic. Eth.* 1180 b (Bk. X. ch. IX. 15).

seems to support the view that gymnastics came first. Yet there is a piece of evidence in Thucydides,<sup>1</sup> which is at variance with this. Diitrephes with his Thracians assaulted and took the town of Mykalessos *at daybreak* . . . 'in particular, they attacked the boys' school, the largest that there was in the place, into which the children had just gone, and massacred them all'.<sup>2</sup> Now Mykalessos is not Athens, any more than Menander's time is the time of Pericles or even of Isocrates, and this is the tantalizing point about most of our evidence – it is not concentrated on our specific period or place, and we are forced at every turn to argue by analogy from other places and other times. At any rate we can assert that Menander puts gymnastics first, while the Mykalessos episode establishes that in Boeotia letters were taught early in the morning. Another analogy is the fact that in the *Protagoras*<sup>3</sup> the sophist is 'engaged' early in the morning. This again is not direct evidence for practice in the junior schools, but it does establish that there was no special prejudice against literary or non-physical exercise early in the morning. The already mentioned fact that when the three branches of education are mentioned by the authorities it is not in any fixed sequence, may also be relevant to our present discussion.

What I should like to suggest emerges from the weight of these in themselves slight scraps of evidence is that the routine of the school day, while probably tending towards the order gymnastics – lyre-school – letters, was not by any means rigidly fixed. Such a flexibility in the time-table would allow the schools to stagger their hours so as to use the day more fully, and the parents to make such selections of times and subjects as would suit their convenience. The principle of 'staggering' was certainly recognized in the Lucian passage, but whether this represents a survival from ancient practice or an innovation of later times it is impossible to say. Lucian refers to the paidagogoi 'bearing in their hands the implements of virtue, writing tablets, or books containing the great deeds of old, or, if he is going to a

<sup>1</sup> cf. p. 78 above.

<sup>2</sup> VII. 29; trans. Crawley (Everyman's Library).

<sup>3</sup> 31.

music-school, his well-tuned lyre'.<sup>1</sup> Here Lucian recognizes a choice between letters and the lyre-school at the same time, though it must be admitted that these two are more closely allied than either is with gymnastics.

## 10 DISCIPLINE

There is a close connection between the discipline imposed at home and that enforced at school. Parents who keep a firm grip on their children generally encourage the school to do likewise. Both Aristophanes<sup>2</sup> and Isocrates<sup>3</sup> complain of the present-day conduct of youth and compare it nostalgically with that of former days. But most generations do the same. Plato was typical in recognizing the fundamental psychology of boys of all eras in history. In a passage of the *Laws*,<sup>4</sup> where Plato refers to what he considers their innate viciousness, and the difficulty of managing them, he imposes it as a duty on all citizens, under threat of deepest degradation for default, to inflict punishment on any boy they see committing a misdeemeanour and on his teacher for failing to prevent it. In the *Protagoras* he represents current practice as imposing a similar strict control:

If the child yield a willing obedience, all is well; if not, they treat him like a young tree that is twisted and bent, and try to straighten him with threats and blows. After this they send him to school, with a strict charge to the master to pay far greater heed to the good behaviour of the children than to their progress in reading and music.<sup>5</sup>

In the *Lysis* we learn of the firm grip that parents exercised at home:

I can assure you, Socrates, he said, she [my mother] not only hinders me, but would get me a good beating if I did touch them.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *Am.* 44-5; trans. Freeman, *Schools* p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> *Clouds* 960-1020.

<sup>3</sup> *Areop.* 48-50.

<sup>4</sup> *Laws* 808 d-809 a.

<sup>5</sup> *Protag.* 325 d; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).

<sup>6</sup> 208; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).

The same firm discipline exists even at the secondary stage. Protagoras refers to the strictness of the other sophists:

Sophists in general misuse their pupils sadly. Just escaped as the lads are from their school-studies, these teachers drive them back again, sorely against their will, into the old routine. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Freeman, however, maintains that discipline in general, and school discipline in particular, was lax:

The weakness of the master's position may be seen from the extreme contempt with which their pupils seem to have treated them. The boys bring their pets – cats and dogs and leopards – into school and play with them under the master's chair.<sup>2</sup>

In a passage of the *Republic* which Freeman quotes,<sup>3</sup> Plato seems to support Freeman's contentions; referring to the greed for liberty Plato says:

Well then, as I was saying, perhaps the insatiable desire for this good to the neglect of everything else may transform a democracy and lead to a demand for despotism. A democratic state may fall under the influence of unprincipled leaders, ready to minister to its thirst for liberty with too deep draughts of this heady wine: and then, if its rulers are not complaisant enough to give it unstinted freedom, they will be arraigned as accursed oligarchs and punished. Law-abiding citizens will be insulted as nonentities who hug their chains; and all praise and honour will be bestowed, both publicly and in private, on rulers who behave like subjects and subjects who behave like rulers. In such a state the spirit of liberty is bound to go to all lengths.

Inevitably.

It will make its way into the home, until at last the very animals catch the infection of anarchy. The parent falls into the habit of behaving like the child, and the child like the parent: the father is afraid of his sons, and they show no fear or respect for their parents, in order to assert their

<sup>1</sup> *Protag.* 318 d; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library)

<sup>2</sup> *Schools*, p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 73.



freedom. Citizens, resident aliens, and strangers from abroad are all on an equal footing. To descend to smaller matters, the schoolmaster timidly flatters his pupils, and the pupils make light of their masters as well as of their attendants. Generally speaking, the young copy their elders, argue with them, and will not do as they are told; while the old, anxious not to be thought disagreeable tyrants, imitate the young and condescend to enter into their jokes and amusements.<sup>1</sup>

I have quoted the passage at some length because I am convinced that Freeman's short quotation gives a definitely wrong impression of Plato's intentions. We know from other passages that Plato was no lover of democracy, but in this case he is not describing the democracy of Athens at all. For one thing Plato is using this account of 'democracy' to support his thesis of the rise of despotism, a thesis which is at variance with the normal course of Greek history, though there were some examples of the course which Plato described, as in Syracuse.<sup>2</sup> Further, Plato is describing the excesses to which democracy may be prone – excesses of such a quality that democracy itself becomes transformed into despotism. In other words, he is not describing any particular democracy, nor, indeed, the features of any historical democracy, but is showing the consequences of all the democratic trends if carried to their logical conclusion. This logical conclusion includes dogs behaving like their masters; 'horses and donkeys catch the habit of walking down the street with all the dignity of freemen, running into any one they meet who does not get out of their way. The whole place is simply bursting with the spirit of liberty.'<sup>3</sup> Plato is deliberately exaggerating in the whole of this passage in order to emphasize his point. The evidence of the *Republic*, therefore, is in quite a different category from the evidence of the *Protagoras*, where current practice is most specifically referred to.

With regard to Freeman's reference to the bringing in of pets, all we can say is that judging from the vases it appears to

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Repub.* 562 c–563 a; trans. Cornford p. 282.

<sup>2</sup> Cornford, *Repub.* p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> *Repub.* 563 c; trans. Cornford p. 283.

have been common practice and allowed by the masters. Indiscipline does not consist in boys doing what they are officially allowed to do; it consists in the devices they find to disobey authority or surreptitiously contravene school rules. That they despised their teachers could well be so considering their lowly status, but it should be remembered that the teacher was employed largely to teach, rather than to educate. The paidagogos was there to enforce good conduct, and indeed it is difficult to imagine what a modern teacher would call indiscipline taking place in the presence of so many adults, with practically one paidagogos to each child hovering somewhere in the vicinity.

The evidence adduced seems to indicate, firstly, an appreciation by the Greeks of the fundamentally unruly nature of the boy – they knew, as any modern teacher knows, that boys in their conduct right from the cradle will test the limit of adult tolerance. From our evidence it is clear that the level of adult tolerance among the Greeks was not very high: witness Aristophanes' complaints against relatively minor indecencies. Secondly, they believed in, and practised, strict control over their boys, enjoining all adult citizens to punish misconduct severely and corporally wherever seen. Thirdly, they took no chances by allowing boys to associate together in huge crowds outnumbering the adults by as many as fifty to one as we allow in our schools. For they supplied each boy or each family with a paidagogos. The teacher, though empowered to punish, was not expected to have to use this power very often; his function was to teach, not to police. Policing was done for him by others.

Fourthly, the state took a keen interest in the moral development of its children, more so indeed than in their intellectual progress. The laws of Solon, already quoted from Aischines, spring from a concern with morality, as does the office of *sophronistes*.<sup>1</sup> The *sophronistai* were ten in number and their function was to superintend the youth in the

<sup>1</sup> References in Liddell & Scott are: *Corpus Inscript.* (Böckii) 214. 17, 262, 271 seq.; *Plat. Ax.* 367 a; Hermann's *Pol. Antiq.* §50. 4.

gymnasia. Freeman<sup>1</sup> claims that they also exercised control over young boys.

## 11 · CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

No doubt, then, as now, adults would have had recourse in dealing with recalcitrant children to whatever weapon lay to hand from bare hands to walking sticks. It is not impossible that the walking sticks in the hands of the paidagogoi and masters as depicted on the vase paintings would have served penal purposes in the heat of the moment. The forked sticks of the paidotribai symbolized the power to punish and were indeed used to chastise the athletes in the course of an exercise for breaches of the rules and to draw attention to faulty positions.

But for formal punishment in the schoolroom a sandal was used. On the Melbourne Splanchnopt Cup a beaten contestant in the lyre competition holds out his hand to receive punishment from the master. The master holds a walking-stick in his other hand and his choice of a sandal to inflict punishment seems to indicate that the walking-stick was not intended for corporal punishment.<sup>2</sup>

In home discipline the sandal seems to have been applied to the child's naked body, and the archaeological evidence seems to suggest that the child's mother did not shirk the responsibility of inflicting punishment.<sup>3</sup>

Another method of formal punishment is attested by Herondas<sup>4</sup> where the schoolmaster instructs two other boys to hoist the victim upon their backs, so that his body will present a good target for the application of a leather strap. Illustrations of this method survive from Graeco-Roman times,<sup>5</sup> but as

<sup>1</sup> *Schools* p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Freeman, *Schools* p. 66, who suggests the contrary possibility.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Anita Klein, *Child life in Gk art* Plates 34 a, 34 b. See also Appendix, List of Monuments.

<sup>4</sup> Herondas III, 59-61, and Freeman, *Schools* pp. 98-100.

<sup>5</sup> Anita Klein, *Child life in Gk art* p. 33. For an illustration of a similar method in Roman times see Bury, *Student's Roman Empire* p. 599.

Heronidas is our earliest authority for it, we cannot be sure whether or not it was used in our period.

## 12 THE PAIDAGOGOS

We have mentioned the paidagogos more than once. A few words must be said about his functions.

As far as the literary record is concerned he first appears in Herodotos.<sup>1</sup> The passage is worth quoting:

Thereupon, Themistocles, when he saw his opinion was overruled by the Peloponnesians, went secretly out of the council; and having gone out, he despatched a man in a boat to the encampment of the Medes, having instructed him what to say: his name was Sicinnus: and he was a domestic and preceptor [*παῖδαγωγός*] to the children of Themistocles; him, after these events, Themistocles got made a Thespian, when the Thespians augmented the number of their citizens, and gave him a competent fortune.

The combination of *oiketes* and *paidagogos* (domestic and preceptor) is especially to be noted. In other contexts<sup>2</sup> *oiketes* means 'member of the family' and in some cases it is even opposed to the meaning *slave* (*δοῦλος*). But here it is important to emphasize that, though a slave the paidagogos was still regarded as a member of the family. This intimacy is established also by certain scenes in the tragedians. It was the paidagogos in Euripides' *Electra*<sup>3</sup> who saved Orestes from death:

OR. Who bore him, as they say, by stealth from death?

EL. The aged guardian [*παῖδαγωγός*] of my father's youth.

The paidagogos here has an honoured place in the family reserved for him after he has finished his task of caring for Orestes' father.<sup>4</sup> Creusa, in Euripides' *Ion*, addresses an aged

<sup>1</sup> VIII. 75; trans. H. Cary (Bohn's Cl. Lib.).

<sup>2</sup> See article in Liddell & Scott.

<sup>3</sup> 286-7; trans. Potter (Everyman's Library).

<sup>4</sup> cf. the tutor in *Medea* 53.

man who was the 'paidagogos of her sire Erechtheus' <sup>1</sup> and later in the same speech refers to him as 'dear one'.<sup>2</sup>

Another point that arises from the Herodotos passage is that Themistocles, in seeking someone to trust with such an important message, chooses the paidagogos. This is but a reflection of the esteem in which a paidagogos was held and the trust which might be imposed in him. Again the tragedians reinforce the point; in Sophocles' *Electra* it is the paidagogos who, taking the initiative in the conspiracy, agrees to enter the palace and bring the message to Electra and Clytemnestra of Orestes' supposed death.<sup>3</sup> The affection in which he is held by Orestes is attested by the latter's words: 'O best beloved of serving men.'<sup>4</sup>

In all the mythic passages to which I refer the paidagogos is something more than a slave who conducts the child to school and supervises his conduct. He seems also to usurp the function of the teacher or *didaskalos*. The paidagogos in Sophocles' *Electra* might almost be described as giving Orestes a lesson in local topography<sup>5</sup> – at any rate he impresses as a man of some knowledge, and later in the play, when bringing the news of Orestes' death, he makes an eloquent speech like a trained messenger. Plato, with some anachronism, refers to Phoenix as the paidagogos of Achilles:

Nor must we praise Phoenix, the paidagogos of Achilles, because he spoke modestly, advising him to assist the Achaeans if they gave him gifts, but otherwise not to abandon his wrath.<sup>6</sup>

Now, the historical role of the paidagogos in our period was to conduct the boy to school and in general to supervise his conduct. That Plato can refer to such a well-known *tutor* as Phoenix as a paidagogos, and that the tragedians can employ paidagogoi as characters in events which, according to mythic chronology, took place long before the introduction of mass instruction and

<sup>1</sup> 725.

<sup>2</sup> Line 730, "Tis sweet to prosper in the company of those that are dear to us".

<sup>3</sup> 1-75.

<sup>4</sup> 23.

<sup>5</sup> 1-20.

<sup>6</sup> *Repub.* 390 c.

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schools, is, to say the least, interesting and, requires some explanation.

I suggest that in early times the Classical functions of paidagogos and teacher, that is, of moral training and of technical, including literary, instruction, were combined in the one person. In fact, since in those early aristocratic days there was little technical and literary instruction, the paedagogic function would predominate. At any rate we see this dual function in both Phoenix and Cheiron. With the advent of schools the two functions were separated, but the paidagogos never entirely lost his connection with technical as well as moral instruction,<sup>1</sup> and no doubt helped the boy with his homework.<sup>2</sup> He rather than the teacher was the lineal descendant of the aristocratic private tutor, and it was he, not the didaskalos, who is the ancestor of our modern concept of the all-round educator designated by the term pedagoguc.<sup>3</sup> And since he was with the child all day, not just a few hours as the several masters were, he necessarily made a much greater impression on the child's character than the masters who merely imparted lessons.

Just as the mythic tutors Cheiron and Phoenix are said to have 'reared' their charges, so the paidagogos of our period could be mentioned by Plato in the same breath as the nurses;<sup>4</sup> referring to the needs of the Luxurious State Plato says:

And we shall want more servants – paidagogoi, nurses, attendants, barbers, cooks and confectioners.<sup>5</sup>

In the *Protagoras* the paidagogos is mentioned together with nurse, mother and father, indicating his status in the family circle:<sup>6</sup>

The moment that a child understands what is said to him, the one point contended for by nurse, and mother, and governor, and the father himself, is the progress of their charge in virtue.

<sup>1</sup> cf. Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* pp. 143–4 and 147.

<sup>2</sup> Xen. *Const. Lac.* 3. 1 links the paidagogos with the didaskalos, implying the overlap of their functions.

<sup>3</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 221.

<sup>4</sup> τρέφειν 'rear' has same root as τροφός 'nurse'.

<sup>5</sup> *Repub.* 373 c. <sup>6</sup> *Protag.* 325 c; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).

The paidagogoi of the tragedians represent a transition between the noble tutors represented by Phoenix, Cheiron and Mentor, and the humble slaves of our period. They are highly respected, implicitly trusted and addressed in every way as equals, even though they are in fact slaves. It is almost certain that their mythical function as tutors has been contaminated by the practice of the times at which the plays were written.

The mythic evidence clearly indicates that from earliest times the Greek boy of noble birth had some tutor or attendant permanently attached to him from earliest childhood to the end of adolescence. Whether such a tutor was described as a paidagogos we do not know for certain, unless Plato's ascription of the term to Phoenix be taken to prove he was. In aristocratic times the father's wealth made possible, and the impossibility of having the child educated in any other way necessitated, the employment of such a person. In our period the moral dangers to which a young boy might be exposed in a society where pederasty was rife made the provision of some form of guardian absolutely necessary. That the functions of aristocratic tutor with a strong moral tradition, and that of bodyguard, should have been combined in the one person was a happy historical coincidence which added a distinctive feature to the pattern of Greek Education.

We have stressed the moral function of the paidagogos, but must not lose sight of the fact that the literal meaning of the word is 'leader, conductor of children', and though this developed in Greek, as the word 'education' did in English, a secondary, moral, meaning as well, this literal function is the more obvious one, and that which is emphasized often enough in our authorities.

Plato, referring to his plan whereby children might watch warfare, brings out this literal meaning:

and they will put them in charge of officers qualified by age and experience to lead and take care of them [ἡγεμόνας τε καὶ παιδαγωγούς].<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Repub.* 467 d; trans. Cornford.

where the conjunction of ἡγεμόνας with παιδαγωγός serves to emphasize the literal meaning of the latter. In this connection a passage in the *Lysis* is worth quoting:

You have some one to rule you, then?

Yes, my governor [παιδαγωγός] here.

Not a slave?

Yes, but he is, though, ours.

Shocking, I exclaimed. A free man to be ruled by a slave.

But how, pray, does this governor exercise his authority?

He takes me to school, of course.<sup>1</sup>

Each family had one paidagogos, and as far as we can gather, one only, no matter how many children there were. In Euripides' *Medea* there is one for Medea's two children. In the passage of Herodotos quoted above, Sicinnus the paidagogos looked after Themistocles' two children.<sup>2</sup> In the closing scene of the *Lysis*<sup>3</sup>

there came down upon us the attendants of Menexenus and Lysis, holding their brothers by the hand, and calling out to the young gentlemen to come home, as it was already late.

Clearly Lysis had to share his paidagogos with his brother. Even in the case of the wealthy Diodotos, his will reveals the existence of one paidagogos, in the provision made for the family:

for two boys and their sister, and a paidagogos, 1,000 drachmae each year, less than 3 drachmae a day.<sup>4</sup>

### 13 HOLIDAYS

Anaxagoras left a bequest to Lampsacus on condition that the day of his death be celebrated by a holiday for schoolboys.<sup>5</sup> In Miletus the fifth day of the month was celebrated as a holiday,

<sup>1</sup> *Lysis* 208 c; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).    <sup>2</sup> See p. 105 above.

<sup>3</sup> *Lysis* 223 a; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).

<sup>4</sup> *Lysias* XXXI f. 28.

<sup>5</sup> Freeman, *Comp.* p. 263; Lemprière, *Gloss. Diet.* p. 43.



in honour of their benefactor, Eudemus.<sup>1</sup> No doubt benefactors were similarly commemorated in other parts of Greece, and we would be safe in asserting that a certain number of school holidays were in the nature of 'special holidays' such as exist in our own system today.

On certain days of the month there were festivals in honour of the gods, or processions, public games and contests, and these provided a break for the pupils, though Marrou, writing of the Hellenistic age, states that these were 'holidays of obligation', not free days<sup>2</sup> – no doubt the same obligation to attend would have applied at Athens in our period. In the passage of the *Timaeus* quoted above<sup>3</sup> the boys are taking part in the Apaturia, though whether the compulsion to attend was of law or of social pressure is uncertain.

The month of Anthesterion was crowded with holidays, as the much quoted passage of Theophrastus makes clear by its reference to the stingy parent who saved himself the expense of fees by not sending his boy to school during that month.<sup>4</sup> Apart from such parentally enforced absences there were no continuous vacations, except in so far as a number of feast-days might come together.<sup>5</sup>

There is little of direct evidence in this for the actual practice at Athens in our period, but the general nature of the case and the conservatism of religious observances make it safe to reconstruct Athenian practice from parallels in analogous times and places.

Marrou quotes a school calendar for the city of Cos in the second century B.C., in which there were eight festivals and two examination days.<sup>6</sup> The details can have no possible relevance to Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries, but for want of closer evidence it probably gives some idea as to the general nature of a school calendar of that time.

<sup>1</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ. Comp.* p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 95 above.

<sup>4</sup> Theophrastus, *Char.* 30; cf. Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 146; Freeman, *Schools* p. 82.

<sup>5</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 148.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* p. 149.

## 14 THE GRAMMATISTE'S

## (i) STATUS IN THE COMMUNITY

It is frequently asserted by writers on Greek Education that the schoolteacher was an object of contempt throughout the ancient world.<sup>1</sup> The arguments brought forward to support this statement are firstly, the fact that they were poorly paid, and secondly, the fact that some ancient writers specifically refer to teachers with contempt.

Let us consider the argument of salary first. The facts are these: teachers might be either masters of their schools, fixing their own fees and perhaps employing other teachers, whether freemen or slaves; or under-masters, working for pay. In the first case the question of salary does not arise – they were running an enterprise just like a stone-mason or a cobbler, and fixed their charges to ensure a fair return for work done. Even though the fees charged individual pupils cannot have been high – if universal education was to prevail it had to be cheap – yet in the aggregate these may have added up to at least a moderate income. If the under-master were a slave, this would not of itself bring teaching into disrepute, as slaves worked in most other professions and occupations alongside free citizens, usually receiving the same pay as the citizens, namely, one drachma a day.<sup>2</sup>

City state life [says Zimmern]<sup>3</sup> was, in fact, democratic; and we ought not to be surprised, though in fact we are, when we find doctors and sculptors and schoolmasters being paid like masons and joiners and private soldiers, at the customary standard rate. They all earned a decent livelihood, which was all that they asked for in pay.

In the fourth century distinctions do begin to arise; the evidence quoted by Marrou<sup>4</sup> and Zimmern<sup>5</sup> refers to Teos and Miletus

<sup>1</sup> cf. Freeman, *School* p. 278; Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* pp. 33, 145.

<sup>2</sup> Zimmern, *Gk Commonwealth* p. 264.

<sup>3</sup> ib p. 271.

<sup>4</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 146.

<sup>5</sup> Zimmern, *Gk Commonwealth* p. 271 note.

and may not be relevant to Athens, but at any rate the teacher's pay was 'slightly higher than the pay of a skilled workman, which was usually a drachma a day'.<sup>1</sup>

\* Any paid employee in our period was regarded as unfortunate since his contract rendered him not free to come and go as he pleased, but this did not apply exclusively to the schoolteacher.

Socrates, it is true, had objected to people taking money for teaching,<sup>2</sup> because it destroyed the old aristocratic relationship of 'association' (*synousia*) between teacher and pupil; but this relationship was certainly undermined anyhow by the class method of teaching, and in any case Socrates is concerned more with advanced education in his criticisms. Further, Socrates is an educational reactionary, and it would not be right to use Socrates' (or Plato's) strictures as evidence of a general contempt for teachers.

Freeman<sup>3</sup> argues that the fact that in Plato's *Laws* the teachers are foreigners indicates that 'they were neither well paid nor highly esteemed'. However, since most professions in Plato were filled by foreigners, teaching is under no disadvantage here. Nor indeed in Athens itself was the foreigner despised, for though excluded from citizenship, his contribution to her life was not unappreciated.<sup>4</sup>

If, then, the assumed contempt for teachers did exist, it would not, in our period, have been on the score of salary.

The second class of evidence – expressed contempt in ancient writers – comes mainly from writers somewhat later than our period, later than the fifth century anyhow. Lucian refers to the degradation of potentates reduced in the after-life to 'begging, and forced by poverty either to sell kippers or teach reading and writing'.<sup>5</sup> But between our period and Lucian there is such a long interval of time that his evidence is not conclusive and merely reveals the final development of a gradually evolving tradition.

Demosthenes taunts Aischines with having been a teacher.

<sup>1</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. Xen. *Mem.* 1, 2, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Zimmern, *Gk Commonwealth* pp. 178–9.

<sup>3</sup> Freeman, *Schools* p. 81.

<sup>5</sup> *Nekyion*, 17.

'You taught letters, I was a pupil.' This is taken to indicate his contempt of the teaching profession, whereas all it proves is that Demosthenes' private fortunes were in fact superior to Aischines'.<sup>1</sup> He goes on to say:

You performed the initiation ceremony, I was initiated. You danced in the chorus, I was the choregos. You were a State-clerk, I debated in the Assembly. You acted the third part, I was a spectator.<sup>1</sup>

In this passage Demosthenes is striving for contrasts, and in each instance indicates the superiority of his own position in life. But to interpret the passage as indicating a general contempt for teaching is misleading. Obviously it is better to be a man of means than to have to work for a living. But in the list of contrasts teaching fares no worse than dancing, acting, or being a secretary of the State. Are we likewise to deduce that these too are contemptible activities?

Epicurus is said by Diogenes to have started life as a school-teacher before turning to philosophy.

They allege that he used to go round with his mother to cottages and read charms and assist his father in his school for a pitiful fee.<sup>2</sup>

Now this passage does seem to place teaching on the same level as reading charms, and show a certain contempt for the low fees. But it is a contempt recorded by Diogenes and is not good evidence that the same contempt was felt in Epicurus' day, much less in the period we are studying.

There are references in Isocrates to the disrepute of teachers, but he is thinking of those providing higher education and not of grammatastai. These references will be discussed later.

It would appear, then, that there is little direct evidence to prove that teachers were held in disrespect during our period. The attempts to prove this point consist in ascribing to the fifth and fourth centuries the prejudices of later times. Nor has it been established that the disparity, if any, between teaching and

<sup>1</sup> Dem. *De Corona* 315.

<sup>2</sup> Diog.<sup>1</sup> Laert. X. 2-4; trans. Hicks (Loeb Cl. Lib.).

other occupations was a source of contempt. However, and we have made the point before, there was a strong antipathy on the part of the aristocracy towards the new arts of mass instruction. Pindar had heaped scorn upon 'those whose knowledge comes from lessons learned' <sup>1</sup> and both Socrates and Plato reflect this aristocratic prejudice. It was therefore natural that some resentment against teachers might survive among aristocratic writers and thinkers, but this would certainly not be proof of general contempt. It is to this aristocratic prejudice that we may trace the germ of the later widespread disrespect for the elementary teaching profession.

(ii) SUBJECTS TAUGHT BY GRAMMATISTES

(a) *Reading and writing.* The child's first task was to learn by heart the names of the letters of the alphabet. To assist the memory a metrical alphabet, containing every letter in correct order but rendered metrical by the cunning interpolation of articles and conjunctions, was used. This version was supposed to have been invented by Callias, in the time of Pericles.<sup>2</sup> Callias<sup>3</sup> is also supposed to have written a spelling drama by which the formation of letters into syllables was made more readily understood. The general method of teaching was to drill the pupils in the spelling of syllables, gradually increasing the length of the syllables and the difficulty of the combinations.<sup>4</sup>

The method is well illustrated by Plato in a passage of the *Politicus*:

STR. We know that children, when they are getting some knowledge of letters –

Y. SOC. Well?

STR. Recognize the several letters well enough in the short and easy syllables, and can make correct statements about them.

Y. SOC. Yes, of course.

<sup>1</sup> N. III. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Athenaeus, X. 453 d; cf. Freeman, *Schools* p. 88. The version is quoted in Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 151.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Freeman, *Schools* pp. 88–9.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* pp. 151–7.

STR. And then again in other syllables they are in doubt about those same letters, and err in opinion and speech about them.

Y. SOC. Yes, certainly.

STR. Would not the easiest and best way to lead them to the letters which they do not yet know be this?

Y. SOC. What?

STR. To lead them first to those cases in which they had correct opinions about these same letters and then to lead them and set them beside the groups which they did not yet recognize, and by comparing them to show that their nature is the same in both combinations alike, and to continue until the letters about which their opinions are correct have been shown in juxtaposition with all those of which they are ignorant. Being shown in this way they become examples, and bring it about that every letter is in all syllables always called by the same name, either by differentiation from the other letters, in case it is different, or because it is the same.<sup>1</sup>

While the memorising proceeds they are also learning to write, the master assisting their prentice hands to follow the right direction. This introductory procedure is referred to by Plato in the *Protagoras*:

And exactly as writing-masters under-rule lines with their pen for such pupils as are still awkward at writing, before they give them their writing lesson, and oblige them to follow in their writing the direction of the lines; so, too, does the state mark out a line of laws . . . which it forces its members to be guided by.<sup>2</sup>

The pupil's progress was frequently tested and advanced by the question type of lesson, where he would be asked to spell out certain words. Plato refers to this practice in the *Politicus*:

Suppose we were asked the following question about a group of pupils learning their letters: 'When a pupil is asked of what letters some word or other is composed, is the question asked for the sake of the one particular word before him, or rather to make him more learned about all the words in the lesson?'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Polit.* 277 c-278 a, b; trans. Lamb (Loeb Cl. Lib.).

<sup>2</sup> *Protag.* 326 d; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).

<sup>3</sup> *Polit.* 285 c; trans. Lamb (Loeb Cl. Lib.).

Xenophon refers to spelling in two passages:

I found that the steerman's servant, who is called the mate, knows each particular section so exactly, that he can tell even when away where everything is kept, and how much there is of it, just as well as a man who knows how to spell can tell how many letters there are in Socrates, and in what order they come.<sup>1</sup>

and again:

'About matters of which, you have certain knowledge, then,' said Socrates, 'as for instance, about the letters of the alphabet, if any one were to ask you how many and what letters are in the word "Socrates", would you try to say sometimes one thing, and sometimes another; or to people who might ask you about numbers, as to whether twice five are ten, would you not give the same answer at one time as at another?'<sup>2</sup>

The passages are worthy of quotation because I think that Freeman<sup>3</sup> draws from them unwarranted conclusions. Firstly he concludes that the grammatistes taught simple arithmetic as well as letters. Now this is a possible conclusion, since the passages do infer that ordinary educated people would have 'certain knowledge' of both letters and arithmetic, and since the kitharistes and the paidotribes would be unlikely candidates for the task of teaching mathematics. But Freeman goes beyond this conclusion and asserts that in some way the spelling and arithmetic lessons were intermixed. It is true that the second passage quoted above says that a man who knows how to spell 'can tell how many letters there are in "Socrates" and in what order they come', but this merely indicates his degree of proficiency in spelling, not that he practised arithmetic by counting letters during the spelling lesson: to be able to say in what order letters come is really to say that you can spell a word. And even if the pupil were asked: 'What is the second letter?' this would be to test his ability to spell, not to count. The two subjects

<sup>1</sup> *Oecon.* VIII. 14; trans. Marchant (Loeb. Cl. Lib.).

<sup>2</sup> *Mem.* IV. 4. 7; trans. Watson (Everyman's Library).

<sup>3</sup> *Schools* p. 103.

about which Socrates' respondent (Hippias) is assumed to have certain knowledge are spelling and arithmetic. The spelling ability is represented by his knowing how many letters there are in 'Socrates' and his arithmetical ability by his knowing that twice five are ten. There is therefore nothing in the evidence to support Freeman's theory of a literally simultaneous learning of both.\* The most that it does suggest is that arithmetic was taught alongside of spelling.

Dictation played a large part in the study of letters<sup>1</sup> and no doubt also served to provide a text for the pupil. It is likely that parchment and ink were used for this purpose.<sup>2</sup>

(b) *Literature.* As soon as the pupil knew his letters well enough he proceeded to a reading of the poets.

And the master does make this his principal care, and as soon as his boys have learned their letters, and are in a condition to understand what is written, as before what was spoken, he sets before them on their benches the works of good poets to read, and compels them to learn them by heart, choosing such poems as contain moral admonitions, and many a narrative interwoven with praise and panegyric on the worthies of old, in order that the boy may admire, and emulate, and strive to become such himself.<sup>3</sup>

This passage is instructive, for not only does it show that literature was the chief subject taught by the grammatistes, but it also indicates the method of treatment. It was not so much studied as literature – this form of study, as we shall see later, was for more advanced students – but primarily as the basis of moral training, as providing examples of noble conduct to be admired and emulated. The method of instruction was to insist on rote learning, and probably to point the moral in each instance. This memoriter method was also recommended by Plato in his *Laws*,<sup>4</sup> and to have learnt both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* by heart was a not unknown accomplishment, not only

<sup>1</sup> Xen. *Oecon.* XV. 6–7.

<sup>2</sup> Dem. *De Corona* 313.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 325 c; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).

<sup>4</sup> *Laws* 814.



among rhapsodes, but also among ordinary citizens. One such was Nicerates in Xenophon's *Symposium*:<sup>1</sup>

soc. But, Nicerates, what is the thing that you value yourself most upon?

NIC. It is that my father, designing to make a virtuous man of me, ordered me to get by heart every verse of Homer; and I believe I can repeat you at this minute the whole *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. But you know very well, said Antisthenes, every public rehearser or ballad-singer does the same at all the corners of the streets. I acknowledge it, said Nicerates, nor does a day pass but I go to hear them.

Clearly Nicerates' father believed a knowledge of Homer was conducive to virtue, though some doubt is thrown on this proposition by Antisthenes, who refers to the scandalous conduct of some of the rhapsodes. Socrates, however, asserts that that is because they recite mechanically without knowing the meaning of the verses they recite.

The moral value of poetry is frequently stressed in Isocrates. He adjures Demonicus to acquaint himself with the best things in the poets, should he aspire to nobility of character.<sup>2</sup> He refers to the precepts left by poets which direct men how to live.<sup>3</sup> He tells Nicocles that he must not neglect any one of the famous poets or sages of old, if he is to become virtuous.<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere he castigates poets for their calumnies of the gods, thus showing the importance he himself attaches to the educational power of poetry.<sup>5</sup>

It is to be inferred from the *Protagoras* passage quoted above that the texts used in schools were selections of the most suitable passages of the poets. It is a fair assumption that some expurgation of unsuitable lines would have taken place, where selection alone did not suffice. Plato in the *Republic*<sup>6</sup> complained about the moral effect of many passages in Homer, and again in the *Laws* he argues for expurgated editions.<sup>7</sup> All this suggests that

<sup>1</sup> Xen. *Symp.* III. 5; cf. IV. 6; trans. Welwood (Everyman's Library).

<sup>2</sup> *To Demonicus* 51; Loeb. Cl. Lib. Vol. I. p. 35; trans. Norlin.

<sup>3</sup> *To Nicocles* 3; Loeb. Cl. Lib. Vol. I. p. 41; trans. Norlin.

<sup>4</sup> *To Nicocles* 13.

<sup>5</sup> *Busiris* 38.

<sup>6</sup> *Repub.* II. 377.

<sup>7</sup> *Laws* 802, 811.

expurgation was common practice, but it was not sufficiently severe to satisfy Plato. Nevertheless it does emphasize the fact that the Greeks viewed poetry as primarily of moral significance and its function in education as the training of character.

Apart from its moral value, poetry was also taught because it was useful, since it contained both the wisdom of the race and practical knowledge applicable to everyday life. The poets were regarded as teachers. Aristophanes makes this point in the *Frogs*:

Poets should offer this training. For consider from the beginning how useful the noble poets have been. For Orpheus showed us initiatory rites, and to refrain from slaughter; Mousaios cures for disease, and oracles; Hesiod the working of fields, the seasons of fruits, and tillage. But divine Homer, from what did he win his honour and glory but this, that he taught useful things, battle-lines, courage, and fighting-equipment of men.<sup>1</sup>

Plato mentions, only to criticize, this attitude towards the poets, especially Homer:<sup>2</sup>

If so, Glaucon, when you meet with admirers of Homer who tell you that he has been the educator of Hellas and that on questions of human conduct and culture he deserves to be constantly studied as a guide by whom to regulate your whole life, it is well to give a friendly hearing to such people, as entirely well meaning according to their lights, and you may acknowledge Homer to be the first and greatest of the tragic poets; but you must be quite sure that we can admit into our commonwealth only the poetry which celebrates the praises of the gods and good men.

Plato's criticism of Homer will be dealt with elsewhere in this essay, but the necessity for it was due to the widespread use made by the Greeks of Homer in their educational system.

It is clear, then, that Homer was the chief and most important author studied in the schools. Isocrates refers to the place of honour accorded him in the training of youth:

Moreover, I think that even the poetry of Homer has won

<sup>1</sup> Lines 1630-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Repub.* 606 c; trans. Cornford.

a greater renown because he has nobly glorified the men who fought against the barbarians, and that on this account our ancestors determined to give his art a place of honour in our musical contests, and in the education of our youth, in order that we, hearing his verses over and over again, may learn by heart the enmity which stands from of old between us and them, and that we, admiring the valour of those who were in the war against Troy, may conceive a passion for like deeds.<sup>1</sup>

Aristophanes, in the passage already referred to,<sup>2</sup> had praised the usefulness of Homer's descriptions of military matters, but Isocrates, in the zeal of his crusade against the barbarians, may perhaps be distorting somewhat Homer's intentions when he asserts that hatred of the barbarians was the chief lesson to be learnt from Homer. Nevertheless, Isocrates' words reinforce our other evidence both about the memoriter method of study used in the schools and the moral significance of Homer, as well as the predominant use of Homer as a school text. It also emphasizes the point which we so frequently infer from Plato too, that Homer could be appealed to as a kind of absolute authority to bolster any claim or theory. For Isocrates is appealing to Homer's authority to support his crusade against the barbarians, as if it were another Trojan expedition. The same attitude is revealed in Herodotos<sup>3</sup> where the Athenians base their claim to the command of the expedition on the fact that Homer had described an Athenian as best for 'arranging and marshalling an army'.<sup>4</sup>

Nicerates in Xenophon's *Symposium* illustrates the view of Homer as a source of practical knowledge.

You all know, or I am much mistaken, there is nothing that relates to human life but Homer has spoke of it. Whoever then would learn Economy, Eloquence, Arms, whoever would be master of every qualification that is to be found in Achilles, Ajax, Ulysses or Nestor, let him but apply himself to me and he shall become perfect in them, for I am entirely master of all that. Very well, said Antisthenes, you have

<sup>1</sup> *Paneg.* 159; trans. Norlin (Loeb Cl. Lib.).

<sup>2</sup> *Frogs* 1030-5; cf. p. 118 above.

<sup>3</sup> Bk. VII. 161.

<sup>4</sup> Trans. Cary (Bohn's Cl. Lib.).

learnt likewise the art of being a king; for you may remember Homer praises Agamemnon for that he was

A noble warrior and a mighty prince.

NIC. I learnt too from Homer how a coachman ought to incline his body to the left and give word to the horse that is on the right, and make use at the same time of a very loose rein. I have learnt all this from him, and another secret too, which if you please, we will make trial of immediately: the same Homer says somewhere that an onion relishes well with a bottle.<sup>1</sup>

This same view is recognized, only to be criticized, in Plato:

Then it is now time to consider the tragic poets and their master, Homer, because we are sometimes told that they understand not only all technical matters, but also all about human conduct, good or bad, and about religion; for, to write well, a good poet, so they say, must know his subject.<sup>2</sup>

This method of studying an author more for the incidental knowledge to be gained than as a piece of literature can be paralleled to a certain extent by our own treatment of classical authors, where the pupils acquire a great proportion of their knowledge of the classical background in history, antiquities and mythology by learning the commentary in the back of the set text, which becomes a text on which to base such learning. By classical times Homer and other ancient writers were already, in our sense of the word, 'classics'.

Other poets who were widely studied in letter-schools include Hesiod, Theognis and some prose writers. We have already quoted Aristophanes' *Frogs* where Orpheus, Mousaios, Hesiod and Homer were mentioned, each for his own special field of knowledge. In the *Wasps* he refers to Aesop in two passages,<sup>3</sup> neither of which is direct evidence for the use of Aesop in schools, but both of which presuppose for their appreciation by the audience a knowledge of Aesop's work and life, which would assuredly only be acquired at school. There is also a reference

<sup>1</sup> Xen. *Symp.* IV. 6; trans. Welwood (Everyman's Library).

<sup>2</sup> *Rep.* b. X. 598; trans. Cornford p. 321.

<sup>3</sup> 1401 and 1446; cf. Starkie's edition p. 375.

to Aesop in the *Birds*,<sup>1</sup> where it is implied that not to be acquainted with Aesop is the sign of an ignorant person.

Athenaeus<sup>2</sup> refers to the catalogue of a school library given by Alexis, a comic poet of the fourth century. Orpheus, Hesiod, Epicharmus, Choirilus are mentioned, as well as the study of tragedy.

The fact that Lysis in Plato's dialogue of that name shows himself well acquainted not only with the poets, but also with the writings of those who 'write on nature and the universe', suggests that the old nature philosophers were not neglected in the schools.<sup>3</sup> Lysis is interesting also as representing, possibly in an idealized form, the standard of education attained by a boy of fourteen; he was able to take part in philosophical discussions with a certain amount of acumen.

Freeman<sup>4</sup> asserts that Prodikos' *Choice of Heracles* was probably popular in schools, but there is no evidence that it was read in elementary schools. Xenophon<sup>5</sup> explicitly states that Prodikos declaimed it 'to most people as a specimen of his ability', that is, as an advertisement of his type of education, which, as we know, was directed towards more advanced pupils and adults.

(c) *Greek*. One very notable exclusion from the elementary curriculum was the study of Greek as such. Protagoras in Plato's dialogue of that name says:

Again, if you were to search in Athens for a teacher of Greek, you would not find a single one, and equally unsuccessful, I imagine, would you be if you were to look for a master to instruct the sons of our mechanics in the very trade which they have learnt from their father, as well as their father and his fellow-craftsmen were able to teach it.<sup>6</sup>

Protagoras implies, of course, that a boy learnt Greek from his father and other citizens and therefore required no formal instruction in it. Also the reading of poetry in the reading lessons bears much similarity to the kind of thing we do in our

<sup>1</sup> 471.

<sup>2</sup> Athenaeus, *Deip.* 164; cf. Freeman, *Schools* p. 95.

<sup>3</sup> *Lysis* 214 b.

<sup>4</sup> *Schools* p. 96.

<sup>5</sup> *Mem.* II. i. 21; trans. Watson (Everyman's Library).

<sup>6</sup> *Protag.* 327 e-328 a; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).

'English' lessons in schools today. But the fact remains that Greek was not formally taught in the schools. Nor indeed was any other language, either in elementary or more advanced schools. The Greeks had no conception of language study as an educational instrument. Any one who did learn a foreign language learnt it purely for practical reasons.

(d) *Arithmetic*. Plato assumes and recommends the study at the elementary stage of simple mathematics, including geometry, astronomy and harmonics as well as arithmetic.<sup>1</sup> He refers to Egypt as a place where children learn practical arithmetic 'simultaneously with their letters', learning it by play-way methods.<sup>2</sup>

Xenophon refers to both spelling and arithmetic as subjects of which Socrates' respondent would be expected to have a thorough knowledge, implying that they were both fundamental elements in education.<sup>3</sup>

Protagoras castigates the other sophists because they

drive their pupils back, sorely against their will, into the old routine, and give them lessons (while saying this he glanced at Hippias) in arithmetic, astronomy, geometry and music.<sup>4</sup>

This, of course, indicates that mathematics was part of the elementary curriculum.

The existence of the game of *pezzo*, coupled by Plato with arithmetic<sup>5</sup> because of its mathematical basis, implies a knowledge of arithmetic among those who played it.

In Aristophanes' *Wasps* Bdelycleon asks his father to calculate 'roughly, not with counters, but on [his] fingers'.<sup>6</sup> The ability to calculate was evidently possessed by any ordinary

<sup>1</sup> *Laws* 809 c-d; cf. Taylor, *Plato* p. 483.

<sup>2</sup> *Laws* 819.

<sup>3</sup> *Oecon.* VIII. 14; *Mem.* IV. 4, 7; but cf. Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 158 and p. 402, stating that only the simplest of additions were learnt in primary school.

<sup>4</sup> *Protag.* 318 d; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).

<sup>5</sup> *Polit.* 299 d.

<sup>6</sup> 656; cf. Staitie's ed. p. 249.

citizen such as Bdelycleon. Theophrastos refers to the use of counters for the purpose:

The tactless person is one who, when reckoning with his counters and working out the total, is then likely to ask the person sitting beside him what it comes to.<sup>1</sup>

Probably the counters referred to were an abacus. Starkie referring to Alexis 15, which he states is the *locus classicus* for the custom, asserts that Athenians carried an abacus with them. Marrou accepts the evidence for this custom but interprets it as indicating the low standard of mental arithmetic attained at school.<sup>2</sup> In any case the verb *πεμπάζειν* which means literally 'to reckon on the five fingers' and which is the equivalent of our word 'calculate' implies that mental arithmetic was performed with the aid of the fingers. Different parts of the hands and body were used to indicate the various magnitudes.<sup>3</sup> Granted these mechanical aids, reckoning is not regarded in the above passages as a highly specialized skill but as an art which ordinary citizens, on the basis of their school education, possessed and practised in the ordinary affairs of life.

The evidence, then, is clear, definite and unambiguous that arithmetic had an assured place in the elementary curriculum. It has already been suggested that it was most probably the grammatistes who gave the instruction.

The actual content of the arithmetic course is difficult to determine in the comparative absence of detailed evidence. The above passages do not necessarily imply a greater knowledge than merely adding, subtracting and simple multiplication. The practice of reckoning on the fingers is well established by the Aristophanes passage. In later times an art of finger counting existed which was rather complicated and by which any whole number from 1 to 1,000,000 could be indicated.<sup>4</sup> It was evidently developed from the method referred to by Aristophanes,

<sup>1</sup> *Char.* XIV.

<sup>2</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* pp. 158 and 402.

<sup>3</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 157, referring to a later period, but the method must have existed earlier in simpler form.

<sup>4</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 157.

but we cannot say what degree of complexity the method had attained in our period.

In the Sixth Book of Herodotos<sup>1</sup> Ariston reckons the months of his wife's pregnancy on his fingers, but this is such a simple sum that it may not imply any special method of finger counting. The story of Orontes referred to by Plutarch,<sup>2</sup> Aelius Aristides<sup>3</sup> and Suidas,<sup>4</sup> which has as its point the fact that the fingers of the hands can indicate either ten thousands or units according to the position of the hand in relation to the body, would, if accepted as historical, date the method at least as early as the fourth century B.C.

There is little concrete evidence to determine the standard of attainment in arithmetic by the Athenian schoolboy beyond the fact that he learned to calculate well enough for the ordinary practices of everyday life. The kind of knowledge assumed by Socrates of Hippias in the passage already quoted<sup>5</sup> is indeed elementary. The standard revealed in the papyri of later times referred to by Marrou<sup>6</sup> is not very high: and there is no reason to suppose that the standards of our period were any better. However, Protagoras implies<sup>7</sup> that astronomy and geometry were taught in the schools as well as arithmetic, though again we cannot deduce anything as to the standard attained in these branches of mathematics. As we shall note again, Plato assumes a training in elementary mathematics as a basis for the higher studies of his guardians, basing his scheme on current practice. The standard reached, however, even in Plato, does not rise beyond the practical applications of arithmetic for counting and calculation, of geometry for the pitching of a camp by the soldiers, and of astronomy for the understanding of the Calendar. It was only into the higher studies that theoretical considerations entered.

<sup>1</sup> VI. 63, 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Reg. Imp. Apophit.* 174 b.

<sup>3</sup> XI.VI D, 257.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. I, p. 339, 3752. The last three references in Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 401, where the story is told.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 116 above.

<sup>6</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 402.

<sup>7</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 318 d.



Just as the elementary schoolboy of today would seem advanced in his knowledge of grammar and composition compared with his Greek counterpart, so the sixth class primary pupil would seem a mathematical genius alongside his Greek equivalent.

## 15 THE KITHARISTES

The art of playing the lyre and of composing songs to be accompanied by it is of great antiquity and is frequently mentioned in Homer. The god Apollo was wont to play the phorminx, and the cithara is also frequently mentioned.

The several forms of lyric composition are all represented in Homer as follows:<sup>1</sup>

*The dirge.* Thetis and the Nereids lament for Patroklos (*Il.* XVIII. 50-1).

Achilles and his followers lament all night for Patroklos (*Il.* XVIII. 314-16).

The Trojans lament for Hector (*Il.* XXIV. 746-75).

*The Hymn.* Chryses and his companions sing a hymn to Apollo (*Il.* I. 472).

*The Hymenaios.* There is a processional wedding song described on the Shield of Achilles (*Il.* XVIII. 492).

*The Hyporchema.* The song of Demodocus at the court of Alkinoos is accompanied by dancing (*Od.* VIII. 256-65).

*The Partheneion.* Artemis is referred to in a simile in such a way as to imply a song and dance similar to the later parthencia (*Od.* VI. 102-8).

*The Monody.* On the Shield of Achilles a boy sings the Linus song, his companions dancing while he sings (*Il.* XVIII. 570).

The forms of lyric poetry, then, go back at least to Homer, and there is an unbroken tradition of lyric composition and

<sup>1</sup> The list given above is based on Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry*, Chapter I (Introduction), pp. 1-16.

performance from Homer down to classical times. Through all this period musical skill was taught and choirs were trained throughout the Greek world – Alcman, Stesichorus, Ibycus, Pindar, Simonides in choral lyric, and Sappho, Alcaeus, Anacreon and Simonides in personal monody are but the best known writers in this long tradition. Some of these, notably Alcman, Simonides and Sappho, appear to have been themselves teachers of choirs and pupils. Of the localization of this instruction in a definite school Sappho is perhaps our best example.<sup>1</sup> In her school, the girls received what Marrou<sup>1</sup> describes as a ‘complete education’. In organization and in law the school was a *thiasos* or religious fellowship, but the basis and chief ingredients of this complete education consisted in dancing, musical performance and singing. Sappho had rivals in her day – Gorgo and Andromeda; and though the Athens of our period can point to nothing comparable in the field of feminine education, the emphasis on music and song as the basis of education whether for boys or girls is representative of the typically Greek attitude to cultural education. It follows that the lyre-school, which inherited this form of cultural instruction, is well rooted in the age-old cultural traditions of the Greeks. The same cultural climate is attested by the popularity of the drinking-song, by the dramatic festivals in which the musical background and the dance played such an important part. The lyre-school therefore represented the cultural and aesthetic tradition as opposed to the practical and intellectual tradition of the letter-school and the sophistic education.<sup>2</sup>

It is of some importance, then, to be able to trace back so far the various forms of lyric song, for it may well be the case that the beginnings of the class method of instruction go back to the teaching of lyric song and dance to groups of young people. The significant development in educational history, therefore, would be not so much the method of class instruction itself, but its application to spheres beyond the teaching of music and song. There can be little doubt that the lyre-school has a longer history than the letter-school, and their different origins explain

<sup>1</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 41.

why one major form of literature (lyric) was taught in a different class-room from that in which the other forms were studied.

The choir-school may be regarded as the natural ancestor of the lyre-school of our period. The training of choirs for public performances was not the function of the lyre-school of our period, this being undertaken by special masters appointed by the citizen at whose expense the choir was to be prepared. But the necessary musical background would already have been provided in the lyre-school. A great deal of the instruction must have been individual, though it is implied by Aristophanes that the songs were sung in unison.<sup>1</sup> The evidence of the vase paintings, as for example the plates reproduced in Freeman, points to individual tuition for instrumental instruction.<sup>2</sup>

Protagoras refers to the work of the music-master:

and exactly on a similar principle the study of the music-master is to produce sobriety of character, and deter the young from the commission of evil; and further, when he has taught them to play, he again instructs them in the works of other good poets, selecting lyric poems for their use, which he sets to his music and compels the minds of his pupils to be familiarized with measure and harmony, to the end that their natures may be softened, and that, by becoming more sensible to time and tune, they may be better qualified to speak and to act.<sup>3</sup>

In this passage Protagoras emphasizes the moral function of music and poetry.

We have already made the point that parents were at liberty to decide what courses their sons should or should not follow in the light of their financial circumstances or personal prejudices. Though none would deprive a boy of a training in letters because of the obvious practical advantages to be gained from that study, many would spare themselves the expense of the lyre-

<sup>1</sup> *Clouds* 966 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Freeman, *Schools*, Plates IA, IB, II, III, IV. This evidence, however, is probably neutral, as the vase-scenes are stylized and the available field is too small for class-scenes.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 326 a; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).

school. Hence to be ignorant of lyre-playing was synonymous with being uneducated,<sup>1</sup> and in general the mark of an impoverished childhood. Further, in view of the lyre-school's long tradition, lyre-playing had come to be regarded as old-fashioned by extreme modernists.<sup>2</sup>

## 16 THE PAIDOTRIBES

The old Homeric training – an education designed and developed for a leisured class of knightly warriors – laid more emphasis on sport than on music. This sport was, of course, in earlier times partly, if not mainly, a means of preparing oneself, and keeping fit, for the business of war.

Sport itself later became divorced from and even opposed to the ideal of preparation for war, and became to a large extent an end in itself. As we shall see directly there arose a class of professional athletes. But it is nevertheless important historically to note the priority of sport in the educational process. Plato, Socrates and the sophists were united on this point at least – to oppose the intellectual ideal to the physical. But Aristophanes, when harking back to the Old Education, lays his greatest stress upon physical education.<sup>3</sup> The acquisition of competence in the various accepted physical activities of leisured life demanded a teacher to impart instruction and to supervise training. In early times no doubt the athletic skills were passed on from father to son, or from an older to a younger warrior, but with the increasing prestige that became associated with athletic prowess (apart from its value as a preparation for war) the demand arose for specialists to train the youth for athletic contests. Marrou<sup>4</sup> argues that the inclusion of children's contests in the Olympic Games for the first time in 632 B.C. presupposes throughout the whole of Greece an organization to train them. There is some doubt, however, what age group is meant by the term 'children' in the Olympic contest.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aristoph. *Wasps* 959, 989. See notes in Starkie's edition.

<sup>2</sup> Aristoph. *Clouds* 1357.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* 961–1023.

<sup>4</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* p. 368–9.

At any rate the paidotribes and his palaestrae were established features of the educational system well before our period commences. Some challenges had indeed, as the literary record shows, been made to the supremacy of sport, and the letter-school was encroaching more and more upon the time devoted to sport, but up to about 450 B.C. the latter had fairly successfully withstood these challenges.<sup>1</sup> By 350 B.C., however, an educational revolution had taken place and sport, though still important, had yielded pride of place to the study of letters and music. It had become more specialized with improved techniques of teaching, but exercised less monopoly over the pupils' time.

The paidotribes was an expert in his field. Like the doctor, with whom he is often coupled,<sup>2</sup> he was expected to be able to prescribe the best exercises for a particular individual. The aim of his training, according to Plato's possibly idealized picture of him, was to increase the strength and beauty of his clients:

What is your work. A trainer, he would reply, and my work is making men's bodies good and strong.<sup>3</sup>

Protagoras<sup>4</sup> refers to the care with which a trainer would be selected:

If you had occasion to entrust your body to any one's care on the chance of its becoming either healthy or depraved, frequent would have been your deliberations on the propriety of the measure; you would have summoned both friends and relatives to a consultation and taken many days to consider the matter.

Of the fees charged by the paidotribes we know little. Athenaeus,<sup>5</sup> referring to a time about 320 B.C., which is just outside our period, mentions a fee of one mina for a whole

<sup>1</sup> The early pre-eminence of the paidotribes is illustrated by the use of the verb *παιδοτριβεῖν* in the sense of 'train, educate'.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Gorgias* 504 a; *Protag.* 313 d; Aristotle, *Politics* III. xvi. 8 (1287 b).

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *Gorgias* 452 b; cf. *Protag.* 326, Grasberger, *Erziehung und Unterricht* I. p. 266.

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 313 a; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library)

<sup>5</sup> *Criep.* 584 c; cf. Freeman, *Schools* p. 134.

course. This seems high compared with the standard rate of the ordinary schoolmaster, but low compared with the earnings of some of the sophists.

The instruction of the paidotribes was given in the palaestra.<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that a palaestra was a training area properly equipped for gymnastics, where exercises were taught. It was in many cases privately owned or controlled. A gymnasium was a more elaborate structure, publicly owned, where any citizen might contend. The phrase ἐν παιδοτρίβῳ<sup>1</sup> is parallel with similar phrases applying to the kitharistes and the grammatistes, and implies a definite location of instruction, and either ownership or rights to the building. The palaestra might belong to the trainer – the Palaestra of Taureas is referred to in Plato's *Charmides*<sup>2</sup> – or could conceivably be hired.<sup>3</sup>

The evidence of the *Lysis* implies that separate classes for boys and men were normal:

as they are keeping the Hermaca, boys and men are all mixed up together today. . . . The greater part were carrying on their game in the court outside, but some of them were in a corner of the undressing-room, playing at odd and even with a number of bones which they drew out of small baskets. Round these were stationed others looking on, among whom was Lysis; and he stood in the midst of boys and youths with a chaplet on his head, unmatched in face or form.<sup>4</sup>

In the *Charmides* also boys and men associate together with little difficulty, though the presence of Charmides' cousin Critias was mentioned to dispel any suggestion of impropriety in the conversation between the adult Socrates and the adolescent Charmides.<sup>5</sup>

For many, especially in early times, the palaestrae were the only places of instruction frequented at all by boys in their middle and late teens.<sup>6</sup>

Though the evidence leaves many points in doubt, it is clear

<sup>1</sup> Aristoph. *Knights* 1238.

<sup>2</sup> 153 a.

<sup>3</sup> See also p. 90 above.

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Lysis* 21 6 d; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).

<sup>5</sup> Plato, *Charmides* 153-5.

<sup>6</sup> *Laches* 179 a; *Xen. Const. Lac.* III. 1.

that the palaestrae were frequented by pupils from the youngest ages to adulthood. It is also clear that there was no set time devoted to gymnastics, some devoting much more time to it than others.

The paidotribes carried a forked stick as the symbol of his office and a reminder of his power to inflict punishment.<sup>1</sup> He was assisted in his instruction by subordinate masters and senior pupils.<sup>2</sup> He was also assisted by flautists who provided the accompaniment for the exercises.<sup>3</sup>

The paidotribes is to be distinguished from the gymnastes, whose function was to provide a more highly specialized training for individual athletic events and who only came into prominence with the increasing professionalism of the second half of the fifth century. The paidotribes has a much longer history, 'for athletic exercises formed part of the national education long before the demand for specialized athletic training arose'.<sup>4</sup> Of course, a paidotribes might also act as a gymnastes, but the two functions were distinct.<sup>5</sup>

Included among the subjects of instruction were javelin throwing, boxing, discus throwing,<sup>6</sup> jumping,<sup>7</sup> running,<sup>8</sup> wrestling (the word *palaestra* means 'wrestling-school') and possibly the pancration.<sup>9</sup>

Freeman maintains<sup>10</sup> that the more recognized exercises such as boxing and wrestling did not begin until the boy was well in his teens. He relies partly on the evidence of the vases, the scenes on which depict older boys only; but we have already noted<sup>11</sup> that this was due to artistic convention and that the rather mature appearance of the boys depicted on the vases is not good evidence for their exact age. Freeman also relies on a passage of Aristotle which implies a graduated course of gymnastic exercises:

<sup>1</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 392; Freeman, *Schools* Plates VIA, VIB.

<sup>2</sup> Freeman, *Schools* p. 128.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* Plate VIII.

<sup>4</sup> Gardiner, E. N., *Greek athletic sports and festivals* p. 503.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* p. 504.

<sup>6</sup> Freeman, *Schools* Plate VIII.

<sup>7</sup> *ib.* Plate VB.

<sup>8</sup> *cf.* Handbk to Nicholson Museum p. 191.

<sup>9</sup> Grasberger, *Erziehung und Unterricht* I. p. 392.

<sup>10</sup> Freeman, *Schools* p. 129.

<sup>11</sup> p. 82 as above.

During youth it is proper to go through a course of those which are most gentle, omitting that violent diet and those painful exercises which are prescribed as necessary; that they may not prevent the growth of the body; and it is no small proof that they have this effect, that amongst the Olympic candidates we can scarce find two or three who have gained a victory both when boys and men: because the necessary exercises they went through when young deprived them of their strength.<sup>1</sup>

Aristotle's argument is that boys should not engage seriously<sup>2</sup> in gymnastic exercises until about the age of thirteen or fourteen. He does, however, imply that current practice endorsed a regular course of exercises, which he approved, as well as in some cases a 'violent diet' in preparation for serious participation in gymnastics, which he deplored at that early age.

Aristotle's testimony implies, then, that some boys were trained for the contests, others not. The first group seldom won both as boys and men. It is implied that those who won as men were not seriously trained as boys: but this does not take into account those juvenile contestants who were unsuccessful as boys, but who might have won as men. This category would still have been trained as boys, a fact which would at least partially vitiate Aristotle's argument. In any case we still do not know to what age groups the Olympic 'boys' events applied. But we can at least assert that even Aristotle does attest the practice of regular gymnastic exercises throughout the boy's school life. In another passage he says:

There are four things which it is usual to teach children, reading, gymnastic exercises and music, to which (in the fourth place) some add painting.<sup>3</sup>

Marrou asserts that children of quite tender age competed in events, at least in the early part of the Hellenistic age:

In these competitions, however, we frequently find several categories of children: in Thespieae there seems to have been

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Politics* VIII. iv. 1338 b; trans. W. Ellis (Everyman's Library).

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* 1338 b.

<sup>3</sup> *Politics* VIII. iii. 1337 b; trans. W. Ellis (Everyman's Library).



a distinction between seniors – *πρεσβύτεροι* – and juniors; in Larissa, Oropos and other places, between younger children and older ones described as ‘beardless’ – *ἀγένειοι*; in Coronea and Chalcis between ‘children’ – *παῖδες* – and ‘wholly children’ – *πάμπαιδες*. It seems reasonable to conclude from this that children took part in gymnastics at quite a tender age. Not only in Sparta, where *mikkikhizomenes* of nine or ten years old competed in the games, but throughout the Greek world, physical education accompanied literary education from the time the child was seven or eight: for this the convergent testimony of the very varied evidence is most striking – there are epigraphical charters from the schools in Teos and Miletus, literary references, inscriptions on tombs, and a mass of sculptured monuments all pointing to the same conclusion.<sup>1</sup>

He further argues that the evidence of later times favouring a late introduction to gymnastic education represents but the culmination of a slow decline in the importance of gymnastics – reversing the process he arrives at the conclusion that in earlier times physical training began at an early age.<sup>2</sup>

Having eliminated the regular physical exercises from the course for younger boys Freeman claims that the teaching of the palaestra for this group consisted of deportment and easy exercises.<sup>3</sup>

Aristophanes in the *Clouds* implies a training in deportment and proper behaviour:

‘And everyone’s thigh was forward and high  
as they sat to be drilled in a row,  
So that nothing the while, indecent or vile  
the eye of a stranger might meet;  
And then with their hand they would smooth down the sand  
whenever they rose from their seat,  
To leave not a trace of themselves in the place  
for a vigilant lover to view.’<sup>4</sup>

Freeman also surmises that ‘gesticulation’ – a method of moving the limbs expressively – was also part of the curriculum.

<sup>1</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 389.

<sup>3</sup> *Schools* p. 129.

<sup>4</sup> *I* lines 973-6; trans. Rogers.

He refers to the skill shown in this art by Hippokleides the Athenian, who performed with his feet instead of his arms;<sup>1</sup> and to Charmides' practising exercises which involved movement of arms and legs according to lessons learnt when he was young.<sup>2</sup>

The Athenian system of physical education produced good results at the Games and the excellence of Athenians became a by-word. 'It is meet,' says Pindar,<sup>3</sup> 'that from Athens should come a trainer of athletes.' It is of interest to inquire by what methods this tradition of excellence arose.

The scenes depicted on the vase paintings all seem to imply an individual method of instruction. That is, the instructor might move from pupil to pupil, giving useful hints as they practised individually or in pairs according to the nature of the exercise for which they were training. Now to a certain extent the training of athletic prowess seems to require considerable individual attention in order to eradicate faults which are individual. But the technical difficulty of representing groups may also have contributed to the fact that the individual method of instruction predominates in the pictorial record of the vases.

For group methods of instruction are attested by the literary record. Plato alludes to the group method of training for the contests:

Well, there are here at Athens, as in other cities, classes for practice in athletics to prepare for contests in running or the like, are there not?

Yes, a great many of them.

Now let us recall to mind the orders given by the professional trainers when they are in charge of such classes.

What do you mean?

They think they cannot go into details in individual cases and order what is best for each person's physique; they think they must employ a rougher method and give general rules which will be good for the physique of the majority.

Good.

And therefore they nowadays assign equal exercises to whole classes; they make them begin at the same time and

<sup>1</sup> *Schools* pp. 129 seq.; *Herod* VI. 127-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Xen. Symp.* II. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Nem.* V. 49.

stop at the same time, whether they run or wrestle or practise any kind of bodily exercise.<sup>1</sup>

Isocrates<sup>2</sup> throws no clear light on the question of group instruction, though his use of the plural in reference to the trainers' 'followers' and his analogy with the teaching of philosophy perhaps imply some form of group method. What we do learn from him, however, is that just as there were patterns or 'forms' of discourse, so there were 'postures' or figures of gymnastic exercises to be learnt and practised as the basis of athletic success.

In short, the services of the paidotribes were required not only in the education of boys but also in the training of youths and men for bodily development or for public contests. As a general rule, and except on special occasions, boys and men were separated. Both individual and group instruction and special coaching were provided. In the range of his clientele, in the wide demand for his services or facilities and in the antiquity of his office, the paidotribes had an initial advantage over the other types of teacher. However, his position as an educator in the highest sense of the word had already been challenged before our period opens. This decline in his prestige as an educator as distinct from his importance as a trainer is partly a reflection of the class struggle but is also directly related to the rise of professionalism in sport.

The tensions that existed in the fifth and fourth centuries in Athenian Education were rooted in the conflict between the old and the new, between the conservative, aristocratic traditions of the privileged classes and the revolutionary and democratic ideals of the rising proletariat. The battle was fought, of course, on other fronts besides the educational – in fact the educational conflicts were but a reflection of the social and political strife – and in other spheres of education besides the physical. But the general trends were represented in physical education and in a sense the paidotribes found himself at the core of the controversy.

The pre-eminence of physical education in early times was

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Politicus* 294 d, e; trans. Fowler (Loeb Cl. Lib.).

<sup>2</sup> *Antid.* 184.

not questioned. It was essentially a means of keeping fit for warlike pursuits and incidentally a pleasant way of occupying the leisure time of the knights. Pre-eminent skill in athletics was a proof of manhood or 'virtue' and a source of prestige among one's fellows. From the start, then, the two-fold nature of athletics was evident – preparation for war and prestige for the skilled, quite apart from the sheer joy of participation. In either case the value of athletics was for long unquestioned.

By the time of Xenophanes<sup>1</sup> the prestige of Olympic success was so high and the rewards so great that the victorious athlete could look forward to a life of ease at the public expense for the rest of his days.<sup>2</sup> Xenophanes voiced his strong protest against this excessive adulation and set himself up as the protagonist of intellectual culture against the cult of the physical. The dichotomy had no doubt existed before, for in the traditional mythology it was clearly recognized that the intellect might easily achieve more than sheer brawn, as in the cases of Odysseus and Ajax. Yet the myths had tried to reconcile the two trends, Odysseus combining the two elements successfully and Ajax being more a figure of fun because he lacked the brains to support his brawn. Nevertheless it was Xenophanes who first highlighted the essential antipathy between the two elements of education, the apparent harmony between which was so rudely disturbed in our period.

But if any one [he says] were to win a victory with fleetness of foot, or fighting in the Pentathlon, where the precinct of Zeus lies between the springs of Pisa at Olympia, or in wrestling, or in virtue of the painful science of boxing, or in a dread kind of contest called Pancration: to the citizens he would be more glorious to look upon, and he would acquire a conspicuous seat of honour at competitions, and his maintenance would be provided out of the public stores by the City-State, as well as a gift for him to lay aside as treasure.

<sup>1</sup> Floruit 530 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Plutarch, *Solon* 23. Solon appointed a reward of 100 drachmae to a victor in the Isthmian Games, and 500 to a victor in the Olympics. At the same time he refused rewards to wrestlers; cf. J. Langhorne, *Plutarch's Lives*, p. 68.

So too if he won a prize with his horses, he would obtain all these rewards, though not deserving of them as *I* am; for my craft (wisdom) is better than the strength of men or of horses. Yet opinion is altogether confused in this matter, and it is not right to prefer physical strength to noble Wisdom. For it is not the presence of a good boxer in the community, nor of one good at the Pentathlon or at wrestling, nor even of one, who excels in fleetness of foot – which is highest in honour of all the feats of strength seen in men's athletic contests – it is not these that will give a City-State a better constitution. Small would be the enjoyment that a City-State would reap over the victory of a citizen beside the banks of Pisa! These things do not enrich the treasure-chambers of the State.<sup>1</sup>

Pindar, as the paid, though willing mouthpiece of the aristocratic tradition thus attacked by Xenophanes, feels obliged to defend the value of sport. He does not face the issue raised by Xenophanes as to whether sport advantages the state, but defends it as a means by which the inborn valour of a noble family may reveal itself by success at the Games. Training and practice are justified because they develop the natural gifts, but Pindar, finding himself on dangerous ground in praising what amounts to semi-professionalism in sport, is at pains to emphasize that athletic training without the benefits of aristocratic blood and divine favour are of no avail.

Pindar is perhaps the last of the reactionary educational thinkers wholeheartedly to attempt to justify the competitive spirit in sport. For no doubt the secret could not be kept for long that common people might have athletic prowess equally susceptible to improvement by training. If that fact becomes accepted, Pindar's whole position is toppled. The democratization of sport brought about by the growth of the professional spirit carried with it a realization of two facts: firstly that a highly trained athlete could be useless for war owing to excessive muscular specialization and sensitive dietary requirements; and secondly, that excessive physical effort was inimical to intellectual effort.

<sup>1</sup> Xenophanes 2<sup>d</sup> trans. in Kath. Freeman, *Ancilla* p. 21.

Euripides voices his disapproval of athletic training in a fragment of the *Autolycus*:

The race of athletes is by far the worst of the myriad ills of Hellas. To their jaws are they enslaved, to their bellies devoted. In youth they parade in splendour, admired of the city, but when bitter old age creeps upon them, they are cast aside like outworn garments. I censure the custom of the Greeks, who assemble to watch these men, honouring a useless pleasure. Who ever helped his country by winning the victor's crown for wrestling, or speed of foot, or for flinging the quoit, or dealing a strong blow on the jaw?<sup>1</sup>

Aristophanes, on the other hand, in this as in other points, opposes Euripides and sings the praises of the athletic ideal.<sup>2</sup>

Plato's position is somewhat ambiguous. His ideal of intellectual culture is fundamentally opposed to the current adulation of sport. He fiercely opposes the competitive spirit in sport, accepting the strictures of Xenophanes and Euripides concerning the usefulness of athletes for combat,<sup>3</sup> and turns physical training to good account by reverting to its ancient purpose as a preparation for war. Plato's guards were to be prepared by sport for the defence of the city, and for this purpose Plato favours sports of a military nature, in addition to wrestling, which he treats as a form of combat rather than a mere competitive game.<sup>4</sup> Plato also endeavours to turn to good account the sporting propensities in human nature by devising games to assist learning.

Xenophon, of course, emphasizes the aristocratic ideal of sport, especially costly ones like hunting, at the expense of intellectual culture. The author of the pseudo-Xenophonic treatise entitled *Constitution of Athens* complains of the neglect of sport in the democracy, which may be but an aristocratic reaction to the inevitable encroachments of intellectual and civic activities on the time formerly devoted to physical training.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> cf. Freeman, *Schools* p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> *Clouds* 1002-19.

<sup>3</sup> cf. *Laws* 796 d; 796 a, d; 830 a.

<sup>4</sup> cf. *Laws* 795 d-796 a; 814 c-d.

<sup>5</sup> *Xen. Const. Ath.* I. 13.

Aristotle, in his ideal state, provides a special square in the city for the performance of gymnastic exercises.<sup>1</sup> He is opposed, however, to too earnest an application to gymnastics, and specifies at what period of life they should be practised. He makes the point that physical and mental endeavour do not mix:

for it is impossible for the mind and body both to labour at the same time, as they are productive of contrary evils to each other; the labour of the body preventing the progress of the mind, and the mind of the body.<sup>2</sup>

His solution of the gymnastic question is similar to that proposed for other professional activities – it may be indulged sufficiently for its educational and constitutional benefits, but not to the point of professionalism.

Now, there is no occasion that anyone should have the habit of body of a wrestler to be either a good citizen, or to enjoy a good constitution, or to be the father of healthy children; neither should he be infirm or too much dispirited by misfortunes, but between both these. He ought to have a habit of labour, but not of too violent labour, nor should that be confined to one object only, as the wrestler's is; but to such things as are proper for freemen.<sup>3</sup>

Aristotle's attitude to gymnastics then, is one of partial acceptance of their educational value, but of opposition to their professional practice. In this he represents the goal to which most informed thought had been tending. What is important for our present discussion is that whereas in 450 B.C. physical education was central in the educational process with just a few sporadic critics, by 350 B.C., despite developments in technique, it was peripheral, its educational purpose being merely to keep the body healthy enough to profit by intellectual culture. This fact symbolizes a major, though gradual, educational revolution.

The diminution of the importance of physical education was due not merely to the demand by the multitude for literary

<sup>1</sup> *Politics* VII. xii 1331 a.

<sup>2</sup> *Politics* VIII. ix 1339 a; trans. W. Ellis (Everyman's Lib.).

<sup>3</sup> *Politics* VII. xvi 1335 b; trans. W. Ellis (Everyman's Lib.).

skills, but also to the pressure of intellectual studies of a secondary or tertiary nature, which fed upon the elementary system, but which also stimulated the demand for elementary instruction as a preparation for the higher studies.

A few remarks may now be made about these higher studies.

## 17 HIGHER EDUCATION

The lack of a centralized state-controlled system of education, with its attendant absence of compulsion, led, in the sphere of elementary education, to a wide variety in the amount, quality and duration of education received by different individuals. An even greater variety is revealed in post-elementary education. It is, indeed, difficult to find satisfactory terms to classify the various levels of this 'higher education'. Some of it was probably merely an extension, at no higher level of attainment, of elementary schooling. Some of it might correspond to what we would term secondary, or tertiary, education, but the distinction between secondary and tertiary is not especially useful inasmuch as the tendency was for those teachers whose courses might deserve the title of tertiary to provide their own preparatory, or secondary, courses in cases where the ordinary elementary education was inadequate.

Pre-eminent in the educational life of Athens were the schools of Plato (and later Aristotle) and other philosophers, of Isocrates and other rhetorical teachers, and the Sophists – these three groups offering a choice of practically every form of advanced intellectual culture. These will be dealt with in more detail later.

Alongside of these, and to a large extent superseded by them, were the scientific schools of the type which Socrates appears to have presided over in his early life,<sup>1</sup> and which reflected the teachings of the Ionian men of science such as Democritus, Anaxagoras, Anaximander and Empedocles, some of whom at least visited Athens in person.<sup>2</sup> The chief reason for the decay

<sup>1</sup> Burnet, *Gk Phil.* p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> Farrington, *Greek Science* (1) Ch. V, pp. 71–80.



of these schools was the religious intolerance of the late fifth century, to which even Socrates, who had long since abandoned the heresies of his youth, fell prey.<sup>1</sup>

\* For those seeking a non-professional post-primary education there would, therefore, have been a wide variety of courses and subjects available.

*Science.* Between about 450 and 420 this might be studied in a school of the early Socratic or Ionian type. Later some of the sophists might give lessons in it. But perhaps serious instruction might have to be sought abroad. Astronomy, acoustics, harmonics, geometry and the like could be studied, but rather as a basis of philosophical speculation than as experimental or observational sciences. Hypotheses might not be tested experimentally in nature – the only test was that of internal and logical consistency.

*Mathematics.* Although connected in some ways with natural science, mathematics belonged to the religious tradition of Parmenides and Pythagoras, and thus escaped the opprobrium heaped upon the natural sciences. Many of the sophists taught mathematics, and much of the time at Plato's Academy was spent in its pursuit.

*Philosophy.* This was taught by Plato in the Academy, by the sophists, and later, by Aristotle in the Lyceum.

*Rhetoric.* There were many schools for professional rhetoricians, but it appears to have been Isocrates who pioneered its study as the basis of a general cultural education.

*History.* The study of history was encouraged by some of the sophists, and by Isocrates.

*Literature.* This could be studied under the sophists and Isocrates. The discussion of the poem of Simonides in Plato's *Protagoras* is a sample of a literary discussion.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Burnet, *Gk Phil.* pp. 147–8; Taylor, *Plato* p. 175 (Ch. VIII, *The Phaedo*).

*Grammar.* The study of grammar was pursued by some of the sophists, notably Prodikos.

## 18 PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

### (i) MEDICINE

The Hippocratic tradition regarded medicine as fundamentally a technique or art and therefore to be taught and practised like any other art. There was, however, a tendency for it to be contaminated by philosophy, which Hippocrates endeavours to combat in his treatise *On Ancient Medicine*. Plato places the physician in the same category as the cook, the ship's captain, the farmer and the shoemaker. 'The physician', he says,<sup>1</sup> 'administers the appropriate diet or remedies to the body.' Medicine is here regarded as a body of knowledge of practical application. The long and complicated regimens which physicians might prescribe are, however, ridiculed in another passage of the *Republic*,<sup>2</sup> where he suggests that such treatments were only for the wealthy. The poor should either recover of their own accord or end their troubles by dying. But the fact remains that the physician had to know how to prescribe regimens for his wealthy patients. Physicians learnt their craft like any other craftsman – by practising it, and associating with other craftsmen.

### (ii) TEACHING

The teaching profession was probably not held in very high esteem, but those who were forced to earn their living by teaching would learn their craft in the same way as medicos – by association, imitation and practice. For the higher type of teaching as in Plato's Academy, Isocrates' school or for the career of a sophist a similar apprenticeship had to be served – long association with the master until independence was achieved. The particular body of knowledge and the techniques of the particular school to which the scholar was attached must be thoroughly learned.

<sup>1</sup> *Repub.* 332 c; trans. Cornford.

<sup>2</sup> *Repub.* 405.

## (iii) LAW

As Greek law did not allow advocates to actually appear for a client the profession of lawyer was not such an elevated one as it was in Rome. Lawyers lived by writing speeches for the clients to deliver. Such a writer of speeches was termed a *logographos*. A *logographos* had to master a certain amount of practical psychology in order to be able to adapt the speech to the character of the client; he had also to learn how to handle legal argument and phraseology.

His training was based upon the *memoriter* learning of a series of stock arguments, openings, perorations and so on. This training might be provided by senior *logographoi*, by the rhetorical schools or by the sophists. Antiphon's tetralogies give some idea of the kind of rhetorical exercise that was practised. Each of them consists of a series of four speeches: the charges adduced by the accuser; the reply of the defendant; the second speech of the accuser and the second reply of the defendant. The speeches themselves are, as it were, skeleton speeches, stripped of all embellishment so as to emphasize the essential framework of a lawyer's method of attack and defence. The Second Tetralogy is typical: a boy is accidentally struck by a javelin while watching a youth practising at the gymnasium. The boy's father accuses the youth of accidental homicide, and the youth's father defends him. This was a different kind of rhetoric than the epideictic oratory of Isocrates. It involved a close study of legal statutes, procedure and other legal knowledge.

A good example of a stock proem is given by Adams in his edition of Lysias.<sup>1</sup> Adams systematically compares a proem of Lysias with a similar one of Andocides (twelve years earlier) and of Isocrates (thirty-four years later) so as to emphasize the similarity both of thought and of phrase. The typical situation involved is that of a

plea for 'a kindly hearing of a defence

(1) that any defendant is at a disadvantage (Andocides and Lysias)

<sup>1</sup> Adams (ed.), *Lysias, Selected Speeches* pp. 166-9.

- (2) that oftentimes accusations have sooner or later been found to be false (Andocides, Lysias, Isocrates)
- (3) that the truth or falsity of charges can be learned only by hearing both sides (Andocides, Isocrates)
- (4) that slander is dangerous (Lysias, Isocrates).<sup>1</sup>

The similarities are clear proof of a common teaching tradition, possibly embodied in a text-book on rhetoric.

Such a tradition is based ultimately on Gorgias, who worked out the main lines along which rhetoric was to develop.<sup>2</sup> His Gorgian figures – antithesis, balance of clauses and final assonance, which are not entirely original with him, but which he was the first to employ systematically in prose – influenced all subsequent oratory and indeed prose style in general. The sample speeches of Gorgias dealt mainly with mythological characters – a panegyric of Helen or an apology for Palamedes. These sample speeches were ‘set’ for students to study or imitate not only as examples of composition, but also as samples of how commonplaces might be employed. Students kept a book of ideas or commonplaces – little essays on topics of universal application that could be adapted to many specific occasions, essays on justice, fortune, nature and so forth, as well as sample proems, exordia and typical appeals to the judges for pity.<sup>3</sup>

Such in brief outline was the choice of intellectual studies open to the youth of the late fifth and early fourth century Athens. A youth could take none of it, or as much as he could afford or might desire. Apart from the formal instruction offered, he could hardly escape from the educational experience of living in Athenian society, and being exposed to its culture. The drama, art, architecture, must all have left their mark on him, no less than the cultivated atmosphere of the symposia with its song, fellowship and moral poetry.

In addition he might attend sporadic lectures or ‘recitations’ or even give one himself. For the educated reading public there were varied, high-class intellectual materials to feed on – the Platonic Dialogues, History (especially Herodotos and

<sup>1</sup> ib. p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* p. 54.

Thucydides) with its didactic purpose, medical reading for 'medical amateurs' as in the Hippocratic corpus, this last corresponding somewhat to medical articles in the *Reader's Digest*. It was in fact in its variety, depth and quality, as well as in its limitations, a classical education to which the youth of that golden era was exposed.

# Theory and Practice of the Great Educators

## I. The Sophists

### 1 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The scientific speculations of the sixth century had succeeded in stimulating intellectual activity but had made no contribution towards offering a guide to conduct. The fifth century witnessed a greater interest on the part of thinkers in the problems confronting man in his relations with society. This was due largely to the rise of democracy and the consequent participation of greater numbers of individuals in political life, which in turn created a demand for an education which would train the citizen to hold his own in this sphere. Such a demand was met, in different ways, by the sophists, who claimed to teach 'political virtue'.

The sophists were professional teachers charging fees for their instruction. Though some of them might argue for educational equality among citizens, this ideal remained theoretical, for in practice their instruction was mainly confined to those rich enough to afford it. What they in fact offered was an education for leadership and social success.

They formed in no sense a school or corporation, but taught as individuals and in competition with one another, and though no doubt a youth might, as opportunity arose, take courses from more than one sophist, there is no suggestion of any integration of courses between one sophist and another. Indeed Protagoras expressly criticizes the curricula of the other sophists.

If Hippocrates comes to me he will not be served as he would be served if he were to attach himself to any other sophist. Sophists in general misuse their pupils sadly. Just escaped as the lads are from their school studies, these teachers drive them back again, sorely against their will into the old routine, and give them lessons (while saying this he glanced at Hippias) in arithmetic, astronomy, geometry and music . . .<sup>1</sup>

It is evident from this that each sophist regarded his own curriculum as sufficient in itself for a complete education. The different curricula reflect their different theories of education.

What they had in common apart from their professionalism was their aim to teach political and social success, and their belief in the power of knowledge to improve human character. This implies both a theory of the disciplinary value of certain studies pursued *οὐκ ἐπὶ τέχνη ἀλλ' ἐπὶ παιδείᾳ*<sup>2</sup> and the rejection of the aristocratic theory of 'virtue' as a matter of innate gifts and divine descent. For the sophists *physis* (nature) was not the whole of virtue, but merely the foundation upon which education must build.

In their moral teaching they were generally regarded as subjectivists, treating morality as a matter of convention. Some, like Protagoras, supported the prevailing conventions while others, like Thrasymachus in the *Republic*, were distinctly a-moral, regarding justice as the interest of the stronger.

In teaching method they seem to have had in common the use of the lecture as their chief means of instruction and to have employed the traditional mythology not only as a vehicle for the expression of their ideas but also as moral patterns and as subjects for composition by their pupils.

Whatever their merits, they seem to have been unpopular, in the eyes of ordinary respectable Athenians like Anytus because of their professionalism, their seemingly a-moral attitude and because of the plain man's suspicion that rhetorical decoration was a mere device to conceal a weak case; in the

<sup>1</sup> *Protag.* 318; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).

<sup>2</sup> *Protag.* 312 b, 'not to acquire technical skill but for their educational value'.

eyes of philosophers like Socrates and Plato because they taught 'an art of opposites' and lacked an objective moral basis for their teaching. However, Plato himself in the early education of his Guardians did not go beyond the sophistic method of habituation to the existing conventions.

It will be convenient at this stage to warn the reader that the account which follows of the leading sophists is based on somewhat tenuous evidence. From the actual undisputed writings of the sophists we possess very little indeed – a few scant pages from Gorgias, a few phrases from Prodikos, a couple of sentences from Hippias and four short sentences from different books of Protagoras. To this evidence must be added various scattered references, mainly late, in other classical authors. Aristotle's *Ethics*, *Politics* and *Metaphysics* contain many unacknowledged reports of sophistic theory, sometimes justly reported, more often distorted and adapted to conform with his own philosophical position.<sup>1</sup>

In several of Plato's dialogues sophists play a leading part. Now the sophists belong to what Havelock calls the *liberal* tradition<sup>2</sup> of Greek thought, of which the basic tenets are:

- i. An evolutionary view of man is presented. Man evolves from lower forms of life and through technology and social organization achieves civilization. The evolutionary process does not end with the City-State but is a continuing process.
- ii. Morality, law and justice are aspects of this process, evolved and accepted because they have survival value, deriving their sanction from 'social consensus and not from any *a priori* absolute principles or from divine authority.
- iii. History is viewed as a slow, continuous and forward progress, and not as cyclical or regressive.
- iv. The general attitude to society is egalitarian and democratic.
- v. The theory of knowledge is 'progressive pragmatic and empirical and behaviouristic'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Havelock, *Liberal Temper* chs. XI and XII.

<sup>2</sup> For the liberal tradition see Havelock, *Liberal Temper* pp. 30, 80 *et passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Havelock, *Liberal Temper* p. 81.



Every sophist did not necessarily expound all these views, but they all had a share in this common tradition as a background for their thought. To all of these ideas both Aristotle and Plato were diametrically opposed, and it follows that their reports of sophistic theory will be coloured by this opposition. Aristotle makes use of sophistic theories but does not make any pretence of systematically expounding the views of individual sophists. Plato does, but the nature of his evidence is somewhat suspect because of his bias. There are at least two possible ways of treating his evidence, each of them with scholarly adherents. We can regard the dialogues as having no historical significance, the sophists being mere lay figures on which to hang an argument. Or we can regard the conversations as basically historical and, with certain qualifications, more or less faithfully recorded. On this view, which is the one accepted in this essay, we assume that the dramatic settings of the dialogues are meant to be historically true, or at least historically possible, and that the statements about the various characters are based on fact, or what Plato believed to be fact. This is not to assert that the exact conversations took place precisely as recorded. If Plato wished to discuss some aspect of education he might write a dialogue showing Protagoras in opposition to Socrates. The views debated and refuted would be based on Plato's knowledge of Protagoras' theories and would be such as he would have been most likely to express and had actually expressed in his teachings or his works, and the historical setting would be such as could have occurred and possibly did actually occur. But, as already mentioned, Plato had a definite anti-sophistic philosophical bias which would lead to distortion in his reporting partly by selection for discussion of vulnerable aspects of his opponents' theories and partly by a dialectical method designed to put the opponent at a disadvantage and thus to destroy his position without giving him a fair chance to clarify it.

On this view we may use the dialogues as evidence but only with the exercise of caution. The value of the evidence may vary from one dialogue to another depending on the circum-

stances. For example, 'the *Protagoras* is committed as no other dialogue is committed to giving a report on sophistic. A similar commitment would not apply for example to the use made of Gorgias in the *Gorgias* or of Thrasymachus in the first book of the *Republic*.'<sup>1</sup>

## 2 PROTAGORAS

### (i) BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Protagoras of Abdera, the earliest of the sophists, seems to have been born about 500 B.C.<sup>2</sup> and to have died soon after the commencement of the Peloponnesian War. He is represented by Plato as considerably older than Socrates, Hippias and Prodikos:

Yet I have now been engaged in it many years, as well may be the case, considering the number I have lived altogether – so many, that there is not one among you, whose father I am not old enough to be.<sup>3</sup>

By 444 B.C. he was of such wide renown that Pericles employed him to draft the constitution of Thurii.<sup>4</sup> His first visit to Athens must have occurred in the forties, when Hippocrates was a boy, and at the time of the second visit Alcibiades was still a youth. Burnet<sup>5</sup> assigns this visit to a date prior to 432 B.C.

Though sharing in the widespread prejudice against the sophists as such,<sup>6</sup> he was personally well respected by all his contemporaries, including Socrates, and his high reputation survived him.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Havelock, *Liberal Temper* p. 165. Havelock, however, while accepting the *Protagoras* as evidence for 'Protagoreanism' does not think it should be treated as a report on Protagoras personally.

<sup>2</sup> But Untersteiner places his birth in 486–5. See his *Sophists* p. 1 and note 7 to ch. 1 (p. 6).

<sup>3</sup> *Protag.* 317 c; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).

<sup>4</sup> Diog. Laert. Bk. IX. 50; Wilamowitz, *Platon* p. 78; Taylor, *Plato* p. 236 note.

<sup>5</sup> Burnet, *Gk Phil.* p. 111.

<sup>6</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 316–17.

<sup>7</sup> Plato, *Meno* 91 c; cf. Taylor, *Plato* p. 141, and Burnet, *Gk Phil.* p. 112.

## (ii) BASIC PHILOSOPHY

There are three basic propositions in Protagoras which are the key to the understanding of his educational thought. These are the doctrines of the 'twofold argument', of 'man the master' and of the 'better argument'.

The first asserts that about any situation it is possible to affirm two statements which are opposed to one another. This is the famous theory of the *δισσοὶ λόγοι* which described a problem which had a long history in early Greek thought. Untersteiner traces it back to the origin of the Greek myth which 'was fashioned in its final originality by the reciprocal action of prehellenic and Hellenic movements which were such as to stimulate the creation of contradictory legends'.<sup>1</sup> The 'twofold argument' was therefore inherent in the mythic material and that is one reason why myth was such an excellent basis for tragedy. The conflicts inherent in the nature of reality constituted the problems of Greek tragedy, and frequently the tragic heroes are crushed simply because there seems to be no solution to the problems, and not because of any defect on their part. 'The Logos of the Danaides', says Untersteiner, 'contends with that of the responsible power of the State.'<sup>2</sup> Xerxes and Prometheus are victims of what seems an insoluble conflict in the nature of things. The very concept of Dike is likewise ambiguous, and Orestes finds himself flouting one concept of Dike while fulfilling the demands of another.<sup>3</sup> The lyric poets reflected on the perversity of life and in certain moods found only room for resignation and pessimism.

The early philosophers took up the same problem. Pythagoras and Heraclitus both recognized the existence of the *δισσοὶ λόγοι* and debated the possibility of an absolute knowledge of the truth.

Protagoras' examination of this problem at the metaphysical level could find no criterion in abstract argument by which the truth or falsity of a concept could be tested. At every stage he found only the possibility of breaking down every concept into two propositions in contradiction with one another, whether

<sup>1</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 21.<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 22.<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 23.

the concept was one of Being, Justice, Usefulness or Morality. What was just in one situation was wrong in another. Things useful to man were not so to animals. There was no way of demonstrating the existence of the Absolutely Useful, Absolutely Just and so forth. The only answer was to assert the relativity of values.

Having demonstrated the impossibility of knowledge on the abstract level Protagoras 'sets himself to examine whether sense-experience permits of the attainment of that truth which the world of abstraction rejects, or appears to reject from its orbit'.<sup>1</sup>

And this leads to a consideration of the second of the two basic propositions mentioned above, that of *metron anthropos*. Rejecting the dualism of Pythagoras, but accepting the principle of 'matter in flux,' he views man himself as in a state of flux just as the objective world is. Man is therefore just as much a part of the external world as matter itself is.<sup>2</sup> Knowledge is therefore a matter of a

true correspondence between sensation and the object of sensation. This comes about when man succeeds in *mastering* things (*χοημιύτων μέτρον*), when, that is, in the course of states in which his own *fluctuating* existence finds itself he finds in matter, among the various *λόγοι* which are immanent in it, that which corresponds to his manner of existence.<sup>3</sup>

Reality, therefore, is a question of manifestation, or conformity to the conditions of cognition. Protagoras does not assert that things only exist by virtue of man's affirming them, but that they exist because they have the quality of being cognizable.<sup>4</sup>

Being a monist, Protagoras does not believe in a transcendental soul, but that the mind (or soul) is simply the sum of its sensations.

The above interpretation is a bald summary of the view of Untersteiner, who claims that it is supported by a passage in the *Theaetetus* (160 a, b):

It follows necessarily . . . that the given object . . . when it is experienced as sweet or bitter or anything similar, is

<sup>1</sup> ib. p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> ib. p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> ib. p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> See Note IV, p. 317.

experienced by someone. It is, in fact, sweet – but it cannot be so without being sweet *to someone*.<sup>1</sup>

In order to support his argument Untersteiner gives a special meaning to the famous dictum of χρημάτων μέτρον ἄνθρωπος ('man the measure'). This phrase is usually taken to mean that man is the criterion of truth or falsity.<sup>2</sup> Untersteiner assigns to it the meaning 'man is master of experiences' and supports this translation in a long philological excursus. He translates the whole passage in which the phrase occurs thus:

Man is the master of all experiences, in regard to the 'phenomenality' of what is real and the 'non-phenomenality' of what is not real.

and explains it thus:

One succeeds in having in one's own power all those 'experiences' of which one can say that they are real, whether sense-percepts or intellectual concepts, in so far as they have the possibility of becoming apparent. . . . The aim envisaged by Protagoras consisted in the mastery of a rich domain of 'experiences', since this was not real until the moment when the 'experiences' were freed from those contradictions which could nullify all their value. This moment coincided exactly with that of their realization as phenomena, which involved a corresponding certain knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

The subject who experiences this knowledge is man, and a certain thing becomes, no matter how, recognizable through the intervention of a subject who is precisely χρημάτων μέτρον, 'master of the experiences'.<sup>4</sup>

The two propositions of Protagoras are opposed to one another. The *dissos logos* is overcome by *metron anthrōpos*, but it is not completely annulled.<sup>5</sup> A third proposition, that of the *kreisson logos*, shows how this possibility of mastery is to be turned to educational advantage.

It is clear from the above that reality consists in the possibility

<sup>1</sup> Trans. Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Burnet, *Gk Phil.* p. 114; Kath. Freeman, *Comp.* p. 349, see Note V, p. 317.

<sup>3</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* p. 49.

of its being cognized. There is no question of falsity when to a sick man 'his food *appears to be* and *is* bitter, and to the man in health the opposite of bitter'.<sup>1</sup> The two states are equally true, but one is better than the other. The two states represent the 'logoi in opposition', but between the two possibilities there is a *difference of value*.<sup>2</sup>

By mastering a better possibility and substituting it for an inferior possibility offered by the same thing man exploits this difference of value for educational purposes. And this is the significance of the proposition *τὸ τὸν ἥττω λόγον κρείττω ποιεῖν* 'to change the lesser possibility of knowledge into a greater possibility of knowledge'.<sup>3</sup>

The role of the educator is therefore to bring about this better state:

So too in education one must bring about a change from one state to that which is better: the doctor effects a change with medicines, the sophist with arguments. Actually, no one has ever caused another who holds false opinions to change them for true ones: it is not, indeed, possible to think what does not exist, nor anything other than that which is experienced: this is always true. But, I think, the man who because of an inferior state of mind holds opinions of similar inferiority is led by an improved condition to hold opinions correspondingly improved. Some through ignorance call these notions true, I however call the one kind better than the other, but in no way truer . . . Thus the one class of men is wiser than the other, and no one holds false opinions, and you, whether you like it or not, must put up with being a 'master'.<sup>4</sup>

The placing of specific experiences into a value-relationship is the work of man's reason, with its power to master all experience. The skilled farmer, doctor or teacher<sup>5</sup> is 'able to apprehend wherein lies the advantage of the community. The *κρείττων λόγος* represents the consensus of opinion concerning

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Theaet.* 166 e; trans. Jowett (Mod. Lib ed.) p. 514.

<sup>2</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Theaet.* 167 a-d; trans. Untersteiner, *Sophists* pp. 52-3.

<sup>5</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* pp. 55.

the advantage to the community of a given experience, while the area of disagreement constitutes the *ἡττων λόγος*. The former is abstract and universal (within a given community), while the latter is specific and individual. The criterion of value, therefore, is the good of the community, and can only be understood by a mastery of many experiences.

Since it is possible by the mastery formula to apprehend the common good, it follows that in Protagoras' view virtue can be taught. We shall revert to this question again shortly, but for the moment we may note the importance for education of the concept of punishment.

No one [says Protagoras], when punishing a criminal directs his thought to the fact, or punishes him for the fact of his having committed the crime, unless he be pursuing his victim with the blind vengeance of a reasonless brute. No, he that would punish with reason, punishes not on account of the past offence – for what has been done he surely cannot undo – but for the sake of the future, in order that the offender himself, and all who have witnessed his punishment, may be prevented from offending hereafter. And if he conceives such a notion as this, he also conceives the notion that virtue may be taught; at any rate he punishes with a view of deterring from vice.<sup>1</sup>

His view of punishment, therefore, is not retaliatory, but intimidatory and ameliorative,<sup>2</sup> and therefore educational. It also presupposes the possibility of learning to foresee the consequences of actions, which in the form of 'learning by experience' is such a cardinal principle in Dewey.

The doctrine of the *κρείττων λόγος* was especially applicable to rhetoric,<sup>3</sup> and since success in public life depended on imposing one's own point of view on the audience, it is easy to see how the doctrine could be perverted to immoral ends. Rhetoric was an art of opposites, but there is no evidence that Protagoras 'thought it proper to bring about, by means of rhetorical skill, evil disguised by the glitter of appearance in place of good'.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 324 b; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).

<sup>2</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 68.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 69.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* p. 69.

When Protagoras suggests that even an unjust man must make a pretence of justice in order not to be thought mad,<sup>1</sup> he does so in order to make the point that 'every single person should in some degree partake of justice, if he is to live among men'.<sup>2</sup> Such a concession gave Aristophanes the chance<sup>3</sup> to satirize the 'twofold argument' of Protagoras and represents the unfavourable and immoral interpretation of the Protagorean doctrine that has held sway so consistently ever since. But it was a false emphasis, for, as Untersteiner says:

The art of good speaking (*εὖ λέγειν*) was not, therefore, for Protagoras an end, but a means which could not only lead to victory in the judicial and political conflict, but could give victory to *σοφία* and *ἀρετή*. . . . Moreover, it does not appear that Protagoras taught a special art of rhetoric.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the preceding philosophical ideas find exemplification in his theory of education.

### (iii) THEORY OF EDUCATION

Protagoras expounds his thought on education through the medium of a myth. The gods entrusted Epimetheus and Prometheus with the task of distributing to animals and men the natural powers necessary for preservation. Epimetheus, who began the distribution, assigned to the lower animals various attributes such as swiftness, size and strength to compensate them for their deficiencies, but omitted to leave any of these powers over for man, who therefore originally had no natural means of defence. Prometheus therefore stole for man the mechanical arts of Athene and Hephaistos and the fire with which to use them to compensate him for his defenceless nakedness. These arts were not assigned in equal measure to everyone, but different individuals received different skills. It is thus evident that Protagoras regarded the division of labour as a principle inherent in man's nature; and this in itself implies that man was from the beginning a social animal, though, through lack of political wisdom, not yet capable of living in

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 323 b.

<sup>2</sup> *Clouds* 882-5.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.*; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).

<sup>4</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 70.



cities. 'Thus furnished, men lived at first scattered here and there, but cities there were none.'<sup>1</sup> This suggests not the independent existence of individuals, but small groups worshipping gods,<sup>2</sup> devising speech for intercourse, providing for themselves food and clothing, but still a prey to beasts. To combat the dangers facing them from wild beasts they sought wider co-operation, but lacking the art of government they could not successfully live together in cities. To save them from destruction Zeus sent Hermes bearing 'reverence and justice to be the ordering principles of cities and the bonds of friendship and conciliation',<sup>3</sup> with instructions to distribute them to all alike, not differently to different individuals, as was the case with the arts.

I should like all to have a share [said Zeus], for cities cannot exist if only a few share in the virtues, as in the arts.<sup>4</sup>

Protagoras therefore viewed human history as divided into two periods, the first, symbolized by Epimetheus and Prometheus, when man learned the use of speech, the crafts, and the arts of building and food gathering, and the mechanical arts of fire. But because they lacked political organization and thus faced annihilation from one another, Zeus ushered in a second period by his intervention with the gift of political wisdom.<sup>5</sup>

Protagoras' view of man as essentially a social being is emphatically brought out in the myth. It was to render man successful in social co-operation that Zeus sent Hermes with the social virtues of *aidos*, *dike* and *philia*, and from this point of development onwards man may be regarded as having a natural tendency towards these virtues.

From the educational point of view it is important to recognize that Protagoras considers *all* men to have an innate tendency to virtue, and therefore the virtue he regards as teachable can, in theory at least, be taught to all. This was a step forward from the older aristocratic view that virtue was

<sup>1</sup> Plato, 322; trans. Wright.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 322.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.*; trans. Jowett.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.*; trans. Jowett.

<sup>5</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 61. See Note VI, p. 318.

only for the élite. For though a Pindar might concede the value of instruction, such instruction would be useless unless coupled with divine descent and noble family. The common people could never attain to *arete*. With Protagoras on the other hand the virtues were open to all, and to all they might be taught. This is not to assert that he considered all men as having equal ability to acquire them, but the uniform distribution of *aidos* and *dike* served to level the natural differences of men. His contribution to the nature-nurture controversy was to insist on the two factors in education – both nature and external influence. 'Teaching needs both nature and training,' he says.<sup>1</sup> Nor did he fail to recognize the necessity for effort and practice on the learner's part.<sup>2</sup>

From the essentially social nature of virtue – Loenen equates it with 'social suitableness'<sup>3</sup> – it follows that all the members of the community will find it expedient not only to practise but also to promote it.<sup>4</sup> As such *arete* can be realized only in the community it is clear that in its development the laws, morals and customs of the community play a major part. In the famous passage in which Protagoras sketches the course of a boy's education<sup>5</sup> we see all these social factors at work. Mother, father and nurse all vie with one another in their efforts to improve the child, teaching him what is just, unjust, honourable and dishonourable. The teachers teach him manners and how to read, and set before him the works of great poets in which are found examples of virtue in heroes and men of old.

<sup>1</sup> Fr. 3. cf. Freeman, *Ancilla* p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 323 c. According to Untersteiner, *Sophists* (p. 65), *physis* is identified with *ἡσσαν λόγος*, and on this level practical exercise (*askesis* or *melete*) is applicable, while the *κρείττων λόγος* represents *didache* or *techné*, that is, theoretical instruction, which embraces speeches, exhortations, reprimands and so forth.

<sup>3</sup> Loenen, *Protagoras* p. 30: 'Educating up to *arete* means the effort at making people sound citizens and this education concerns all the members of the civic community.'

<sup>4</sup> This is the traditional view as represented, for example, by Anytus in the *Meno* – 'goodness can be taught by any decent Athenian', cf. Taylor, *Plato* p. 142.

<sup>5</sup> Plato, *Protag.* §25.

When he leaves school he is compelled to learn the laws and live after the pattern which they furnish. For the laws are his guide to conduct and he is to be punished for transgression. Thus morals, customs and traditions constantly brought before the child accustom him to virtuous living while the laws insist upon his following the correct pattern. Right from infancy punishment is an important educational weapon.

Just as an artisan trained in some art finds difficulty in finding a teacher to carry him further, while one wholly ignorant of the art has no such difficulty, so, in a state where all share in the knowledge of virtue, it is equally difficult to find a teacher of virtue. Yet Protagoras does believe that there are some in the state able to promote virtue 'ever so little', and these have the duty of making others 'good and noble'. Such a one Protagoras believes himself to be; and the philosophical basis for this teaching of virtue is to be found in the doctrine of the *kreisson logos* and the mastery of experiences discussed above.

#### (iv) EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

(a) *Fees and clientele.* The widespread prejudice against the sophists was partly due to their acceptance of fees, but Protagoras is quite unashamed of his profession and of the fact that he accepted payment for his teaching.<sup>1</sup> His fees, indeed, seem to have been very high and to have brought him considerable prosperity. Diogenes asserts that he 'was the first to exact a fee of 100 minae'.<sup>2</sup> Hippocrates was ready to expend all the property of himself and his friends in his determination to be enrolled.<sup>3</sup> Socrates had already expressed doubts whether their joint means would be sufficient to pay the fees.<sup>4</sup> In the *Meno* we learn that after forty years in his profession Protagoras had made more money than 'Pheidias and any other ten sculptors put together'.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 316-17; cf. 328 c, where a pupil can 'take an oath of the value of the instructions, and he pays no more than he declares to be their value'; trans. Jowett.

<sup>2</sup> Diog. Laert. IX. 8. 52, cf. IX. 8. 50.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 313.

<sup>4</sup> ib. 311.

<sup>5</sup> Plato, *Meno* 91 c; cf. Burnet, *Gk. Phil.* p. 111.

It follows that his pupils were drawn only from the wealthy class. Hippocrates was the son of Apollodorus 'of a great and prosperous house'.<sup>1</sup> The young intellectuals gathered at the house of Callias,<sup>2</sup> son of Hipponicus, included Paralus and Xanthippus, the two sons of Pericles, and Charmides, the son of Glaucon. There were also a crowd of listeners, mostly foreigners, who could afford to follow the great master from city to city. The pupils would fall under one of three categories. Some, presumably, were enjoying a brief contact with the master during his stay in Athens, others followed him around for more extended courses, but like the first group were receiving the instruction for the purpose of improving their social efficiency,<sup>3</sup> or as part of their general education, much as a young gentleman might take music or art lessons not with any professional interest but purely for their general cultural value.<sup>4</sup> The third group, of whom Antimocrus of Mende was one,<sup>5</sup> consisted of those who were studying to become sophists themselves, and who, possibly, would not only receive instruction in the subject matter, but also in the teaching technique, of which Protagoras was master.

It is clear then from the high cost of Protagoras' instruction that, while as a social theorist he believed education to be open to all, in practice the higher grade of training which he offered, as distinct from the elementary training which all citizens received, was available only to the élite.

(b) *General method of teaching.* Protagoras' theory of method takes account of both *physis* and *didache*. He mentions as factors in the learning process:

application or study	<i>epimeleia</i>
training or practice	<i>askesis</i>
instruction or teaching	<i>didache</i>

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 316; trans. Jowett.

<sup>2</sup> For Callias as a pupil, cf. Plato, *Apology* 20: 'has spent more money on sophists than all the rest put together'; cf. Taylor, *Plato*, p. 82, referring to *Cratylus* 391 a-c.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 318.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* 312 a-b.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* 315 a.

It is important to note that Protagoras does emphasize the activity and application of the pupil in the learning process, for a casual reading of the text might lead one to believe that 'he offered some painless form of education:

If Hippocrates comes to me he will not experience the sort of drudgery with which other sophists are in the habit of insulting their pupils . . .<sup>1</sup>

But this refers to the type of courses offered by other sophists, without implying that his own courses are painless. In his view application is still necessary for the acquisition of virtue.

I will endeavour to show further that they do not conceive this virtue to be given by nature or to grow spontaneously, but to be a thing which may be taught and which comes to a man by taking pains.<sup>2</sup>

This idea of the acquisition of virtue by a man's own efforts, aided by a good teacher, receives fresh emphasis at the hands of the sophists, and especially of Protagoras. It is in strong contrast with the old aristocratic ideal whereby virtue is inborn and a nobleman's toil and effort are merely a revelation and proof of such virtue. Under the sophistic ideal man is accorded a new equality, and with certain provisos any citizen is capable of being perfected. Though their methods varied widely, most of the sophists believed that human nature could be improved by some form of intellectual training, and Protagoras plays a significant part in the development of this theory.

Of the other two factors mentioned by Protagoras *askesis* meant simply the application of the knowledge acquired, while *didache* suggests not the mere giving of instruction but the whole activity of the teacher in correcting his pupil's mistakes, advising him in his exercises and encouraging him in his efforts. The three factors were all necessary for successful learning. We have here a theoretical basis for a teaching method.

As represented in Plato, Protagoras exhibits a strong preference for the expository or lecture method of instruction,

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 318; trans. Jowett.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* 323f trans. Jowett.

which is well illustrated by his account of a boy's education,<sup>1</sup> by the myth of Prometheus,<sup>2</sup> and by his account of expediency.<sup>3</sup> In seeking to make his points clear he makes frequent use of analogy and example. In the lecture method his superiority is acknowledged by Socrates, who, however, also admits his competence in the dialectic or question and answer method:

our friend Protagoras cannot only make a good speech, as he has already shown, but when he is asked a question he can answer briefly; and when he asks, he will wait and hear the answer, which is a rare gift.<sup>4</sup>

I have heard, I said, that you can speak and teach others to speak about the same things at such length that words never seem to fail, or with such brevity that no one could use fewer of them. Please therefore, if you talk with me, to adopt the latter or more compendious method.<sup>5</sup>

Now you, as is said of you by others and as you say yourself, are able to have discussions in shorter forms of speech as well as in longer, for you are a master of wisdom; but I cannot manage these long speeches.<sup>6</sup>

Socrates, on the other hand, though he does give a rather long lecture later in the *Protagoras* on the poem of Simonides, prefers the shorter method, and in the wrangle over method which takes place in the dialogue he refuses to converse except under his own terms:

but when you are willing to argue with me in such a way that I can follow you, then I will argue with you.<sup>7</sup>

Both parties protest their desire to 'hold dialogue' but in different ways. Socrates insists on short answers only, Protagoras wants the right to clarify his answers and not to permit Socrates to dictate the line of argument.

Socrates, he replied, many a battle of words have I fought, and if I had followed the method of disputation which my adversaries desired, as you want me to do, I should have been

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 325-6; trans. Jowett.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* 320-2.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* 334 §.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* 334.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* 335 b.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* 329 b.

<sup>7</sup> *ib.* 335 b.

no better than another, and the name of Protagoras would have been nowhere.<sup>1</sup>

His objection to the Socratic method is that it puts the respondent at a disadvantage, which is precisely what it does do.<sup>2</sup> For in a Socratic argument the respondent makes no contribution to the argument. He merely answers yes or no to indicate that he follows the line of reasoning and in effect to separate one syllogism from another.<sup>3</sup> Despite the pretence of ignorance the questioner usually knows the end result and there is no genuine participation on the learner's part. Even where the questioner is searching for a solution he converses more with himself than with the respondent.

The sophists, too, recognized the value of indoctrination in education, but for this purpose they employed the lecture method. But where a solution to a genuine problem was required, or where they were training pupils in the method of finding solutions, they employed their own version of the dialogue method, which differed both from their lecture method and from the dialectic of Socrates. The contrast between their long and short styles is mentioned in three of the passages just quoted and is thought by Havelock<sup>4</sup> to be a technical distinction made by the sophists to mark off two distinct types of argumentation. According to Havelock the short style was the discussion group style. In this there is a genuine search for knowledge or right decision by means of a consideration of the points of view of both (or all) the participants, and the final conclusion is reached by a resolution of different points of view, or at any rate by a genuine acceptance by one party to the discussion of the other's point of view after consideration of all the possibilities. This willingness on the part of Protagoras to take account of the views of other participants is emphasized in the first of the above quotations:

and when he asks, he will wait and hear the answer, which is a rare gift.

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 335 a; trans. Jowett.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Havelock, *Liberal Temper* p. 209.

<sup>3</sup> ib. p. 210. <sup>4</sup> ib. p. 213.

We must not lose sight of the fact that much of the sophists' thinking was oriented towards social and political theory and that the aim of their education was social efficiency. Because of their democratic bias this meant efficiency in a democracy, in which effective decisions were reached after democratic debate. Their method of discourse was coloured by its application to the purposes of democracy. A right decision could only be reached by the participation of many minds resulting in a democratic consensus of opinion. It was not that all opinions were equal, but at least all were worth the hearing. This doctrine of consensus concerning the common good in a given situation as the criterion of the value of knowledge was basic to Protagoras' philosophical position, as we have already noted, and it was but natural that it should also undergird his educational method.

The different attitudes to dialectic exhibited by Socrates and Protagoras reflect the different philosophical bases of their educational theory. For Protagoras knowledge could be acquired pragmatically in the context of everyday situations, for Socrates it could only be awakened maieutically by a skilful questioner from dormancy in the soul of a respondent.

The method of group-criticism of both master's and pupils' compositions as later developed by Isocrates and which Johnson<sup>1</sup> rightly regards as an original and significant educational development on Isocrates' part must surely have evolved from the group discussion method of Protagoras which is implied by his consensus theory.

An important feature of Protagoras' teaching, and one which has little to do with technique, was his insistence upon the value of personal association of teacher and pupil.<sup>2</sup> He refers to the custom of his pupils 'living with him under the idea that they will be improved by his conversation',<sup>3</sup> and again, he says to Hippocrates: 'Young man, if you associate with me, on the very first day you will return home a better man.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, 'Isocrates' methods of teaching', *Amer. Journal of Phil.* vol. LXXX, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Langerbeck, *Δόξαι Ἐπινομή* p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 316; trans. Jowett.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* 318; trans. Jowett.



Now this idea of *synousia* ('association') is not by any means new with Protagoras. It is as old as written records and as valid today as in the mythic age of Cheiron, but it is interesting to note that Protagoras, a sophist with all the sophists' improvements in teaching technique including their use of the sporadic lecture to large groups, still insisted upon the necessity of this personal relationship for really effective teaching.

In short, Protagoras' general method was based on

- i. The group-discussion method for acquisition of, or training in the method of acquiring, new knowledge.
- ii. The lecture method for the transmission of accepted knowledge.

These two techniques were combined into a third which was applicable specifically in the political field but which was still educational in the wider sense of the term. This technique is defined by Havelock<sup>1</sup> as

The antithetical formulation of public positions and the setting of party lines which took place in any parliament or assembly where power was at stake and public policy was made.

He also liked to illustrate his thought by the use of the apologue or myth. The myth had always been a basic element in Greek Education and Protagoras chooses this form for the exposition of his views on social theory and educability early in the dialogue named after him. In this respect he shows himself heir to a long tradition, and in expounding his modern theory in so ancient a form he shows the flexibility of the myth for teaching purposes.

We have noted above that after Hesiod the myth tended to become an externalized form of thought, and that the mythopoeic mode of thought was no longer employed for philosophic purposes. The pre-Socratic philosophers all tended to use it with deliberate intent as a fulcrum for the development of philosophic ideas, and the myth of Prometheus is an illustration of this trend. At the outset Protagoras states his intention to

<sup>1</sup> Havelock, *Liberal Temper* p. 216.

convey his 'proof in the form of a mythical story',<sup>1</sup> as an alternative to going 'through it step by step in a serious discussion',<sup>2</sup> thus clearly indicating the new method of using the myth to illustrate an idea in contrast to the older method whereby the reorganization of the tradition or the use of a preferred version might reveal an idea inherent in the myth itself. At each stage he comments on the mythic events in direct philosophical language to bring out the purpose of the action or to emphasize the principles involved. For example:

And so throughout the whole of the distribution he maintained the same equalizing principle; his object in all these contrivances being to prevent any species from becoming extinct.<sup>3</sup>

This is a far cry from the impersonal method of Homer and Hesiod.

(c) *Method of teaching rhetoric.* So far we have been describing Protagoras' general method of education. We shall now consider its specific application to the study of rhetoric, which was, of course, the chief subject of sophistic instruction. We do not have much evidence of their specific teaching methods, nor does our evidence readily enable us to make detailed distinctions between the methods of the individual sophists. Some reference has already been made to the tradition of rhetorical education.<sup>4</sup> This tradition, despite later refinements and improvements, was remarkably consistent throughout the whole classical period and it is generally agreed that its comparatively permanent form was first given to it in the age of the sophists. Despite differences of emphasis, mainly in the subjects of the ancillary curriculum, it is probable that each of the sophists followed a basically similar teaching method. In describing Protagoras' method, therefore, we shall virtually be giving a composite account of the general sophistic method. The following were the main elements in the method.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 320; trans. Wright.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.*

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* 321; trans. Wright.

<sup>4</sup> p. 145 *supra*.

<sup>5</sup> cf. Johnson, *op. cit.* p. 32; Vollgraff, *L'Oraison* p. 25; Marrou, *Hist. Educ.* pp. 53-4.

1. The rules of rhetoric were systematically studied.
2. Commonplaces, stock phrases, stock ideas, stock proems and exordia were committed to memory. (This reminds us of the formulaic method of the epic poets.)<sup>1</sup>
3. Model discourses from the hands of the masters were studied and learnt and probably discussed. The myth of Protagoras was probably one such discourse as were the *Funeral Oration*, the *Helen* and the *Palamedes* of Gorgias. According to Vollgraff<sup>2</sup> Gorgias realized that the figures, to be effective, must be used sparingly, but in the *Funeral Oration* he strung them together for didactic purposes – to present to the students a text embodying in a short, memorizable context as many different figures as possible. Because the sophists had a more or less common purpose in teaching rhetoric it seems likely that a common stock of themes would have accumulated, as had been the case with the epic poets of earlier centuries, but whether one sophist would have used an actual discourse of another is uncertain. It is more likely that he would have worked up his own version of the same theme.
4. Having saturated himself in prepared material the pupil would be able to call upon it on the spur of the moment according to the needs of the situation. Again we are reminded of the techniques of epic poetry. This method of improvisation on the basis of prepared material would be justified by the doctrine of *kairos* which is emphasized in Gorgias but is also implicit in Protagoras' thinking.<sup>3</sup> Isocrates, too, uses both the technique and the term, and according to Vollgraff<sup>4</sup> it came to have in the rhetorical sphere the technical meaning of 'improvisation'. Of course, this kind of improvisation is the logical consequence

<sup>1</sup> See p. 144 *supra* for stock proems.

<sup>2</sup> Vollgraff, *op. cit.* p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Gomperz (*Sophistik und Rhetorik* pp. 165–7) claims that the doctrine emanated from Protagoras, but Vollgraff (*L'Oraison* p. 24) maintains that it was common to both Protagoras and Gorgias, being implied by their views on moral relativism.

<sup>4</sup> Vollgraff, *L'Oraison* p. 25.

of the practice of studying commonplaces and as we have already remarked it is not dissimilar to the formulaic improvisation of oral poetry. In the rhetorical sphere we cannot be sure whether the practice or the theory has priority, though I would hazard a guess that the method first arose empirically in early rhetoric and finding justification in the *kairos* doctrine of Protagoras and Gorgias was subjected to refinement at their hands. As the stock of commonplaces grew it was organized and systematized and in this process Protagoras no doubt played an important part.

5. Constant practice was had in making speeches, probably on either side of a given question. This procedure would accord with Protagoras' philosophical views, but would also be dictated by common sense. For to debate well you must know all the possible arguments for and against the question.

The necessity to be able to talk on many subjects and be ready to answer opposing arguments demanded a wide general knowledge. All the sophists emphasized the importance of wide knowledge, and this was made possible by the ancillary subjects of the curriculum. Though the sophists' curricula must have had much in common there were also many differences. A few words will next be said about the curriculum of Protagoras.

(d) *Curriculum*. In the famous passage outlining an Athenian boy's education from infancy to manhood<sup>1</sup> Protagoras sets forth the current curriculum of the elementary education of the day. As he does not criticize its content we may safely assume that his own conception of an elementary curriculum was consonant with what was actually done in the schools. The reasons he gives for the inclusion of the various subjects are his own but the practice he describes is sufficiently orthodox as to find ready acceptance by the average Athenian statesman.

The subjects taught by the actual teachers in the schools – as distinct from the general educative influences of society as a

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 325–6.

whole – consist of poetry, music and gymnastic. The whole of this teaching is directed towards character training. The works of the poets contain

‘admonitions and many tales and praises, and encomia of ancient famous men, which he is required to learn by heart in order that he may imitate or emulate them and desire to become like them.’<sup>1</sup>

The good examples offered by poetry he regards as a means towards the development of character. Music, likewise, carefully selected and taught with due regard for the effect of certain rhythms on the ‘soul’ is directed towards moral ends. Gymnastic ensures that mere bodily weakness will not be allowed to destroy the effect of the other lessons. Alongside the formal elements of education he mentions the legal compulsion to learn the laws and the function of the laws to encourage moral conduct.

Protagoras’ more advanced instruction has this foundation to build upon and has a similar moral aim.<sup>2</sup> The virtue which he seeks to develop consists in

prudence in affairs private as well as public: [the pupil] will learn to order his own house in the best manner, and he will be able to speak and act for the best in the affairs of the state.<sup>3</sup>

These words may be taken as his programme of instruction the objective of which is an increase in social efficiency which is equated with success in action and debate and in the art of politics.

What subjects, then, did Protagoras believe calculated to achieve this aim? Certainly not merely a more intensive study of the content of the elementary curriculum, for he specifically rejects ‘calculation, astronomy, geometry and music’.<sup>4</sup> But for the study of poetry at the higher level he expresses a great regard:

I am of the opinion, Socrates, he said, that skill in poetry is the principal part of education and this I conceive to be the

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 325 e–326 a; trans. Jowett.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* 318.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* 319; trans. Jowett.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* 318.

power, of knowing what compositions of the poets are correct, and what are not, and how they are to be distinguished and of explaining when asked the reason for the difference.<sup>1</sup>

This higher study of poetry was somewhat formal, involving an advanced knowledge of grammar and subtle distinctions between the meanings of words, if the discussion of Simonides' poem in the *Protagoras* is any sample.<sup>2</sup>

In the field of grammar he seems to have made some important contributions which were no doubt embodied in his lectures. Diogenes says he was the first to distinguish the tenses of verbs and to mark off the parts of discourse into four, namely wish, question, answer and command.<sup>3</sup>

In logic and dialectic he had an especial interest and is said<sup>4</sup> to have developed a method which seeks to confound an opponent by taking his admissions as points of departure for the argument. This interest in logic was the basis of his teaching of rhetoric. He maintained that there are two sides to every question<sup>5</sup> and proceeded to teach a technique whereby any proposition could be refuted.<sup>6</sup> This is the orthodox view of Diels derived from Diogenes IX. 51. Untersteiner, however, interprets the passage as meaning

not that . . . Protagoras derived from the ἀντικείμενοι λόγοι a method of instruction in which one logos was opposed to another logos, but that he argued by question and answer in such a way as to reveal the ἀντικείμενοι λόγοι inherent in every concept.<sup>7</sup>

Protagoras' programme emphasizes the development of skill in speaking and the subjects so far mentioned contribute specifically to this aim in so far as verbal expression and presentation of arguments are concerned. But verbal skill without a wide background of knowledge is of little use. Protagoras himself possessed such a background and in a passage of the

<sup>1</sup> ib. 338 e-339 a; trans. Jowett.

<sup>3</sup> Diog. Laert. IX. 8. 52-4.

<sup>5</sup> ib. IX. 8. 51.

<sup>7</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 41; cf. p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> ib. 339 seq.

<sup>4</sup> ib. IX. 8. 53.

<sup>6</sup> ib. IX. 8. 53; cf. 52.

*Protagoras*<sup>1</sup> where he is discussing things that may be useful in some contexts and harmful in others he gives evidence of his knowledge of such subjects as animal husbandry, veterinary science, agriculture and household medicine. The fact that he was acquainted with these fields does not in itself prove that they formed part of his curriculum, but since, as Havelock says,

Household management therefore meant not just handling servants, spring cleaning, marketing, and petty cash transactions as it would today, but the processes of agriculture, manufacture, commerce and banking.<sup>2</sup>

and since Protagoras specifically includes household management ('the pupil will learn to order his own house in the best possible manner') in his programme it is safe to agree with Havelock<sup>3</sup> in including these subjects in his curriculum. Since he was also regarded as an expert on law, and in fact acted as lawgiver for Thurii on one occasion,<sup>4</sup> and since the study of law was of obvious relevance to success in forensic oratory, it is a fair assumption that this subject too was offered by Protagoras.

We have mentioned his classification of things as useful or injurious according to circumstances.<sup>5</sup> This classification is in accordance with his relativist standpoint and suggests that the study of the practical subjects proceeded on pragmatic lines – the study of the effect of different items under differing conditions. Such a method of study would train the student in the making of sound decisions in the light of prevailing circumstances, which is what Protagoras has in mind when he proclaims in his programme that he will teach pupils 'prudence (*euboulia*) in affairs private as well as public'.<sup>6</sup>

His philosophical empiricism, his concept of the mastery of experiences and his views on society serve to undergird his views on the curriculum. The orthodox elementary curriculum of social habituation is provided by Protagoras with a philosophical basis. Despite many fundamental differences his in-

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 334 b-c.

<sup>2</sup> Havelock, *Liberal Temper* p. 205.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.*

<sup>4</sup> Diog. Laert. IX. 8. 50; cf. Burnet, *Gk Phil.* p. 111.

<sup>5</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 334 b-c.

<sup>6</sup> cf. Havelock, *Liberal Temper* pp. 164, 205.

fluence has not been felt by the modern pragmatists. Had his views survived in his own works instead of in the subtle distortions of Plato and in the misinterpretations of modern secondary educational historians, his influence on modern educational thought would undoubtedly have been great. Despite the almost total neglect to which he has been condemned by modern educational writers, it is clear from the evidence of Plato and from the work of Untersteiner and Havelock in their reconstructions of his position that he was an educator of primary importance in the ancient world.

### 3 GORGIAS

#### (i) BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Gorgias of Leontini was born somewhere around 490 B.C. – the precise date cannot be exactly determined.<sup>1</sup> He belonged to a cultured family, for his brother Herodicus was a physician. He was a disciple of Empedocles whose influence on him can be traced.

The only exact date in his life that we know is that of his visit to Athens in 427 B.C. at the head of an embassy to seek help against Syracuse.<sup>2</sup>

His subsequent travels took him, amongst other places, to Thessaly, to the court of the Alcadae.<sup>3</sup> He returned to Athens about 421, which is given by some authorities as the date and occasion of his *Funeral Oration*,<sup>4</sup> and died in Thessaly at the incredible age of one hundred and nine.<sup>5</sup>

Among his many pupils were numbered Isocrates, Critias, Alcibiades and Thucydides.<sup>6</sup>

#### (ii) BASIC PHILOSOPHY

In his essay *On Not-being or on Nature* he asserts that:

1. Nothing exists, whether Not-being or Being.

<sup>1</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* pp. 92 and 97.

<sup>2</sup> Diodorus XII. 53. 1 seq.; Pausanias VI. 17. 8; Plato, *Hipp. Maj.* 282 b.

<sup>3</sup> Isoc. *Antid.* 155; Plato, *Meno* 70 a.

<sup>4</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 95. <sup>5</sup> *ib.* p. 94.

<sup>6</sup> Most of the above facts from Untersteiner, *Sophists* pp. 93-4.



2. If anything exists, it is incomprehensible.
3. If it is comprehensible, it is incommunicable.

It is not proposed to examine the details of the argument here,<sup>1</sup> but simply to remark that Gorgias recognizes the same ambivalence of experience as Protagoras. But whereas the latter found a path to knowledge by the 'mastery formula', Gorgias saw the dissolution of all experiences into antitheses as a bar to positive knowledge, and leading only to a tragic *aporia*.<sup>2</sup>

He was not a sceptic [says Untersteiner<sup>3</sup>] but a man of tragedy; it was not his object to bring about a dissolution of thought; he merely discovered it.

This discovery of the 'tragic' as a philosophical theme is regarded by Untersteiner as Gorgias' great contribution to philosophical thought. Just as the tragedians revealed the irreconcilability of ethical principles and the insolubility of the inherent conflicts in things, so Gorgias, transferring the concept of the tragic to the philosophical sphere, finds the problem of knowledge to be equally insoluble.

The conflict of things which is latent in Attic tragedy now bursts forth into the light of philosophical consciousness.<sup>4</sup>

*Logos* is ambivalent and cannot reveal truth, but is always split into inevitable antitheses.<sup>5</sup> Both the antitheses are thinkable, though neither can be true. But that which brings about an acceptance of either antithesis on any given occasion is *Apate* or Deception. Deception in the philosophical sphere is equivalent to creativity in the poetical sphere.

Tragedy by means of legends and emotions [says Gorgias] creates a deception in which the deceiver is more honest than the non-deceiver, and the deceived is wiser than the non-deceived.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The full argument is set out in Freeman, *Ancilla* pp. 128-9, and Untersteiner, *Sophists* pp. 145 seq. See also Freeman, *Comp.* pp. 359 seq. for a critical discussion.

<sup>2</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* p. 151.

<sup>6</sup> Gorgias 23; trans. Freeman, *Ancilla* p. 138.

Deception and persuasion are the mechanisms by which *logos* operates. That which determines the outcome of deception and constitutes the criterion of its acceptance is *kairos*, 'the right moment'.

*Logos*, then, in conjunction with persuasion and deception, is a force of tremendous power, and is to be contrasted with *doxa*, 'mere opinion'. The contrast is not between truth and opinion, but between a superior and an inferior way of knowing. *Logos* is able to bring about a change in the 'opinion of the soul'<sup>1</sup> by the medium of poetry and artistic prose. In so doing it transforms 'disconnected knowledge into a knowledge which creates or discloses links and relationships'.<sup>2</sup>

The power of speech over the constitution of the soul can be compared with the effect of drugs on the bodily state: just as drugs by driving out different humours from the body can put an end to the disease or to life, so with speech: different words can induce grief, pleasure or fear; or again, by means of a harmful kind of persuasion, words can drug and bewitch the soul.<sup>3</sup>

Just as tragedy can provide an insight into universal human emotions, so *logos* can rise to a knowledge of universals, but as these universals are always subject to dissolution into antitheses, it cannot, of course, attain to truth. It can, however, lead to action, whereas opinion may lead to error only.<sup>4</sup>

In the sphere of ethics the power of *logos* and the mechanisms of deception and *kairos* can lead to a decision between alternatives based on the concept of the 'right thing at the right moment' (τὸ δέον ἐν τῷ δέοντι). There are, therefore, no universal, objective ethical prescriptions, but the will of the individual can lead to a right decision on particular occasions. The justice of an action such as lying or stealing depends on the circumstances, on whether, for example, one is dealing with friends or enemies.<sup>5</sup> There are no absolute virtues, only the

<sup>1</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.*

<sup>3</sup> Gorgias 11 (14) in Freeman, *Ancilla* p. 133.

<sup>4</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 116.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* p. 179.

specific virtues of a man, a child, or a woman.<sup>1</sup> The idea of *kairos* reappears here too.<sup>2</sup>

So far as concerns ethic [says Untersteiner<sup>3</sup>], as is proved especially by the dramatic situation glimpsed in the decision of the heroes in the *Funeral Oration*, it is always a question of an act of cognition which, not being able to embrace in one conceptual synthesis the antithetical extremes, the ethical *dissoi logoi*, chooses one of these: in the present case the virtue which the 'occasion' (given by the time and the circumstances) renders inevitable. The virtues are also irrational.

### (iii) RHETORIC

His attitude to rhetoric is based on his view of *logos* which operates by means of persuasion and deception. His definition of rhetoric as 'the artificer of persuasion' is referred to in Plato's *Gorgias*,<sup>4</sup> and again in the *Phaedrus* as 'the art of winning men's souls by means of words'.<sup>5</sup>

The skill of the orator depends on his appreciation of *kairos*, on the adaptation of his speech to the needs of the occasion. The ability to persuade an assembly, or a law-court, was, in Gorgias' view, indispensable to social or political success and the highest achievement of human endeavour.<sup>6</sup> The art of rhetoric may be abused and directed to immoral ends, but the teacher of rhetoric cannot be blamed for this, any more than a teacher of boxing is responsible for his pupil's foul play.<sup>7</sup> Rhetoric may be perverted by utilitarian considerations, but Gorgias himself does not advocate this. Rather it is implied by his theory that *kairos* determines the orator's responsibility on each occasion.

### (iv) USE OF MYTHOLOGY

In his use of mythology Gorgias exhibits the same tendencies that we have noticed in Protagoras and which were character-

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Meno* 71 c.

<sup>2</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 180.

<sup>3</sup> ib. p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Gorg.* 453 a.

<sup>5</sup> Plato, *Phaedr.* 261 a; trans. Wright.

<sup>6</sup> Taylor, *Plato* p. 108; cf. *Philebus* 58 a-b.

<sup>7</sup> Plato, *Gorg.* 456-7.

istic of his period. His epistemological and ontological arguments were set forth not only in the essay *On Not-being or On Nature* but also in his mythological works, the *Helen* and the *Palamedes*, where the myths are but pretexts for the unfolding of philosophical doctrines. In the *Helen* Gorgias subjects the heroine's conduct to a systematic analysis in the apagogic style according to what he considers the four possible causes of her elopement, namely divine will, violence, the power of *logos*, or necessity:

For either by the disposition of fortune and the ratification of the gods and the determination of necessity she did what she did, or by violence confounded, or by persuasion dumb-founded, or to Love surrendered.<sup>1</sup>

The *Palamedes* is ostensibly a defence by Palamedes against Odysseus' charges of treachery, but like the *Helen* it reveals by philosophic argument, though by a different route, the impossibility of knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

#### (v) IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

It remains to consider the implications for education of Gorgias' basic philosophy.

His nihilist and irrationalist views do not provide a promising basis for positive education. Since there are no absolute virtues and no concept of the 'common good' but only the possibility of coming to a 'dramatic decision' at each moment of choice,<sup>3</sup> it follows that virtue cannot be taught. As Meno remarked, Gorgias

laughs at those others whenever he hears them engaging to teach men to be virtuous; and thinks it the office of a sophist only to make men great orators and powerful at speaking.<sup>4</sup>

Certain precepts can be enunciated such as that of the 'just deception', but as it requires maturity to recognize the right

<sup>1</sup> Gorgias 11 (6); trans. Van Hook in *Isocrates* vol. III. p. 56 of Loeb edition. This translation preferred to Freeman, *Ancilla* p. 131, as better representing the style of Gorgias.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 138.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 182.

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Meno* 95; trans. Sydenham (Everyman's Library).

moment (*kairos*), such a doctrine cannot be taught to the young.<sup>1</sup> If virtue cannot be taught, it can however be approached by 'mastering the natural pleasures' and by rejecting 'the lure of wealth, as Gorgias himself did.'<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, with regard to rhetoric there are no set precepts to teach, but the orator must become practised in the recognition of the *kairos* fitting to each circumstance. To assist the process the teaching method adopted was to insist on the memorizing of commonplaces and model speeches composed by the master<sup>3</sup> in the hope that some analogy might be ready at hand for similar situations in practice. Further, the linguistic processes behind 'deception' and 'persuasion' could be taught and studied; the use of the 'figures' and other adornments of style would fall into this category. The aim of the finished orator was to be able to speak well on all subjects, a facility requiring a wide knowledge. Such a capacity Gorgias himself claims to have had.<sup>4</sup> Meno refers to this capacity:

From him you Thessalians learned the habit of answering to any question whatever with an undaunted and a noble confidence, such indeed as becomes those who have a thorough knowledge of the subject proposed to them. For he in the same manner offered himself to be freely interrogated by any one of the Grecians, whom it should please to ask him, concerning any point which the party questioning might choose; and to no question of any person did he ever refuse an answer.<sup>5</sup>

In short, his method of teaching rhetoric differed little in practice from that of the other sophists and indeed from that of the later rhetorical teachers of our period.

Gorgias is probably more important in the history of philosophy than in the history of education. His most positive contributions are his advocacy of a wide general education, of a

<sup>1</sup> cf. Gorgias 21 in Freeman, *Ancilla* p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> Gorgias 11a. (15) in Freeman, *Ancilla* p. 135.

<sup>3</sup> ib. 14 in Freeman, *Ancilla* p. 138; cf. Freeman, *Comp.* p. 365.

<sup>4</sup> ib. 17 in Freeman, *Ancilla* p. 138.

<sup>5</sup> Plato, *Meno* 70; trans. Sydenham (Everyman's Library).

study of grammar not only in its relation to logic and philosophy but also as a basis for rhetorical skill, and of the need for the development of oratorical skill for social and political success. His insistence on memorization and constant practice in the art of recognizing the 'right moment', though justified from his own unique philosophical standpoint, is none the less important for being in harmony with the practice of other sophistic teachers.

Unfortunately, his nihilist philosophy could easily be perverted into the immoral attitudes of a Kallikles, or worse, of a Thrasymachus; and the doctrine of *kairos* could degenerate in the hands of lesser men to an advocacy of blatant opportunism.<sup>1</sup> It is against the immoral possibilities of such teaching that Plato so strongly revolted.

#### 4 PRODIKOS

##### (i) BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

The evidence for a biography of Prodikos is extremely scant. He is mentioned in Plato's *Protagoras* as an established teacher of great repute, and his theories are caricatured in the *Clouds* and *Birds* of Aristophanes. We cannot fix his date more accurately than to say that he lived in the latter half of the fifth century.

Ioulis in Ceos was his home town, but he frequently visited Athens on official state business, and also in the course of practising his itinerant profession. He was a welcome guest at the houses of the wealthy, such as Callias.

He offered a short course on language for one drachma, and a longer one for fifty drachmas. His pupils included Socrates, who, however, could not afford to take the fifty drachma course;<sup>2</sup> Agathon and Pausanias, Euripides, Isocrates, Theramenes and Thrasymachus and possibly Xenophon.<sup>3</sup>

His literary works consisted of *The Hours*, with a section entitled *On Nature* with a subdivision on *The Nature of Man*.

<sup>1</sup> Burnet, *Gk Phil.* pp. 120-1.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Cratylus* 384 b.

<sup>3</sup> Freeman, *Comp.* pp. 370-1.

He also wrote epideictic speeches, one of which, no doubt, was the famous *Choice of Heracles* preserved in distorted form in Xenophon.<sup>1</sup>

## (ii) PHILOSOPHICAL AND EDUCATIONAL IDEAS

Prodikos' philosophy is in the tradition of Greek evolutionary thought that we have noted before in Hesiod and Protagoras. Man is compounded from the four primordial elements, and as in the myth of Protagoras, is originally weak and defenceless. Aristophanes refers to this doctrine of Prodikos in the *Birds*:

Come now, men feeble of nature, like unto the generations of leaves without strength, moulded of mud, shadowlike sapless creatures, wingless, short-lived mortals wretched and dreamlike, pay attention to us the immortal, the eternal, etherial, ageless, whose thoughts are imperishable, so that you may learn from us rightly about the heavens, about the nature of birds and the origin of the gods and of rivers and of Erebos and Chaos, and may you know the truth about them and tell Prodikos for me to go hang for the future.<sup>2</sup>

Man's path to security and civilization is aided first by the agency of the special gods 'consisting of natural phenomena as givers of things useful to human life', the daemones, 'as for example the sun, . . . the moon, rivers, springs, lakes, fields';<sup>3</sup> next by the 'discoverer' gods who revealed to man the useful functions of nature, such as agriculture. These included Demeter, Dionysos, Poseidon and Hephaistos. In this Prodikos borrows from the Eleusinian cults.<sup>4</sup> His religion is therefore a naturalistic one, but there is no concept of a unified divine providence, because although the discoverers might reveal the useful arts, man still had to practise and perfect them in a slow progress, with sweat and toil.<sup>5</sup> In this the lower animals are more fortunate, since nature provides them with everything. This contrast is brought out in the passage of Aristophanes quoted above, and also later in the same play in the choric ode which proclaims the happy state of the birds.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Xen. *Mem.* II. 1. 21-34.

<sup>3</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 210.

<sup>5</sup> ib. p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> *Birds* 685 seq.

<sup>4</sup> ib. pp. 210-11.

<sup>6</sup> *Birds* 1089 seq.

Euripides, no doubt with Prodikos in mind, opposes this view:

Someone has said that evils outweigh the good things in the affairs of men. But I hold the opposite opinion to this, that good things outweigh the evil amongst men.<sup>1</sup>

and goes on to list the advantages that have enabled man to achieve civilization.

In any case, this view of evolution brought about by man's own efforts in taking advantage of the gifts of the gods does imply that man has the capacity to learn, communicate and pass on knowledge. The question of the communicability of knowledge is bound up with Prodikos' views on language and on the *nomos-physis* antithesis.

From the fact that the question of synonyms was dealt with in *On the Nature of Man* Untersteiner has argued that

for Prodikos words were *φύσει* if considered in themselves, in their etymology, and *νόμῳ* in their practical application, in the business of civilization, that is to say, in their synonymic differentiation.<sup>2</sup>

According to this hypothesis each word by nature stood for one thing only, expressing that meaning onomatopoeically. That is, the meaning of words depended on nature, not on convention. In this he was in direct conflict with Gorgias. In Prodikos' view, it was of the utmost importance that synonymic distinctions should be carefully studied if truth were to be attained and knowledge communicated. Prodikos' studies in etymology and synonyms were a contribution more to philosophy than to philology, and in this respect he conforms to the usual Greek tradition. Scientific etymology of the modern kind belongs to a different age.

Though Plato and Socrates themselves were not uninfluenced by Prodikos in their attitude to the careful use of words, Plato does seem to ridicule Prodikos somewhat. In the *Protagoras* he pictures Prodikos, when wishing to say that the audience should give speakers a fair hearing, as using the opportunity to draw

<sup>1</sup> *Supplices* 196-9.

<sup>2</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 212.



subtle distinctions in connection with practically every word he uses. 'Impartiality' is contrasted with 'equality', 'argue' with 'wrangle', 'esteem' with 'praise' and 'gratify' with 'please'. Prodikos does not merely state the distinctions, but illustrates them by their context.<sup>1</sup> Later in the same dialogue, Socrates, when dealing with the poem of Simonides, employs Prodikos' methods to support his own half-playful interpretations, appealing to Prodikos' authority to support the distinctions he has made.<sup>2</sup> It is likely in all this, as Taylor suggests,<sup>3</sup> that Plato is having a little good-natured fun at Prodikos' expense by picturing him as somewhat of a pedant, and also possible that, allowing for exaggeration, this represents Prodikos' manner fairly exactly. But it is also clear that in its proper place, that is, in the class-room, Prodikos' method is an excellent one for teaching the accurate use of words and the subtle distinctions between synonyms, and would not be outmoded in a modern class-room.

At any rate Prodikos was something of a pioneer in the science of synonyms and exerted a considerable influence on the whole of subsequent Attic oratory.<sup>4</sup>

Prodikos' treatment of the nature-nurture controversy is based on the view that man inherits a character which requires the supervision of *nomos* to achieve the civilized life. This is brought out by the *Choice of Heracles* where the hero, being offered a choice between Vice, which appeals to his *physis*, achieves a moral victory by choosing Virtue, which is a *nomos*. *Nomos*, therefore, interprets and perfects *physis*.<sup>5</sup> Virtue, like the arts of agriculture and metallurgy, is something that the gods have discovered and taught to mankind. Prodikos thus gives an emphatically positive answer to the Socratic question – Can virtue be taught? He also implies that in any learning situation both nature and nurture play complementary parts.

Like his fellow sophists Prodikos used mythology for the expression of philosophical thought, but if the *Choice of Heracles* is any criterion he goes even further by inventing an entirely

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 337.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* 341 seq.

<sup>3</sup> Taylor, *Plato* p. 252.

<sup>4</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 215 and p. 225, note 68 to ch. XI.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* p. 217.

new myth to illustrate his thought, rather than merely adapting an old myth.

His contribution to educational thought may be summarized briefly: he asserted the communicability of knowledge and the teachability of virtue; he reconciled the claims of *physis* and *nomos*; he asserted the possibility of human progress subject to the stern necessity for personal effort; he introduced the close study of the meaning of words into his curriculum; and he extended still further the use of the myth for teaching purposes.

## 5 HIPPIAS

### (i) BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Hippias, the son of Diopeithes, was a native of Elis. He took part in the discussion in the *Protagoras* of which the dramatic date is about 432. He is mentioned in the *Apology* together with Prodikos and Gorgias. Untersteiner<sup>1</sup> rejects the historicity of the meeting of 432 and places his birth about 443. He was considerably younger than Protagoras and lived to a ripe old age.<sup>2</sup>

His works reveal a catholic knowledge and an encyclopaedic interest. They include epideictic speeches, as *The Trojan*; works of an antiquarian nature as the *Register of Victors at Olympia*, and the *Collection* consisting of miscellaneous pieces of information on the history of philosophy and religion; a work on the *Names of Peoples*, and works on mathematics, in which field he invented the quadratrix, a method of trisecting angles and squaring the circle; studies of Homer;<sup>3</sup> and discourses on astrology and language.<sup>4</sup>

### (ii) BASIC PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATIONAL IDEAS

The universality of his interests is related to his basic philosophy and to his educational aims. In particular, the education of the orator and the politician must be based on the ideal of a wide

<sup>1</sup> p. 272.

<sup>2</sup> The above facts are largely taken from Freeman, *Comp.* p. 381.

<sup>3</sup> The above facts from Freeman, *Comp.* pp. 382-91, and Untersteiner, *Sophists* pp. 273-4.

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Hipp. Maj.* 285 c.

knowledge of all things so that he will not be at a loss in any situation.<sup>1</sup>

His claim as a philosopher is to 'know the nature of things'<sup>2</sup> and his aim to attain to a knowledge of *physis* through wide and many-sided learning.

Such a knowledge may be acquired by a study of letters or words; of numbers or sense-images; and of the concept of justice.

The first involves that detailed analysis of words to which Socrates refers in *Hippias Major*:

those subtle distinctions, in which you excel all others, on the value of letters, syllables, rhythms and modes.<sup>3</sup>

The study of numbers and of geometrical figures, based as it is on sense-perception, is the foundation of his emphasis on the study of the sciences.

The concept of justice is based not on written law, but on the observation of the customs of many peoples, and is equivalent to unwritten law.

I regard you all as of one kin and family and country by nature, though not by law; for like is akin to like by nature, but law, which lords it over men, does frequently violence to nature.<sup>4</sup>

In *Thucydides* III. 84 (regarded by Untersteiner and others as spurious, and attributed by Untersteiner to Hippias)<sup>5</sup> he refers to human nature 'as always rebelling against the law', and goes on to remark that the Corcyraeans also abandoned 'those general laws to which all alike look for salvation in adversity'.<sup>6</sup>

Hippias thus contrasts written law with general or universal law, which corresponds with the demands of *physis*, and thus sets up an antithesis between *nomos* and *physis*. In his search for

<sup>1</sup> Untersteiner p. 278.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 337 d, and Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 278 and note 6 to ch. XV, p. 295.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *Hipp. Maj.* 285 c.

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 337 d; trans. Wright (Everyman's Library).

<sup>5</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 277.

<sup>6</sup> Trans. Crawley.

these general laws Hippias made a study of the peoples of all nations and did not confine his attention to Greek peoples only. And this cosmopolitan attitude is but another aspect of his encyclopaedic interests.

One aspect of his cosmopolitanism is the emphasis on the individual and the consequent interest in individual differences. In his discussion of Homer in the *Hippias Minor* he is concerned to point out the different character traits of Achilles and Odysseus:

Herein he brings to light the character of the two men: Achilles, truthful and uncomplicated; Odysseus, deceitful and unreliable.<sup>1</sup>

In the *Troianus* and other works he appears to have made a special study of various types of character and of their ways of life. The passage of Thucydides referred to above exhibits the same interest in the psychological description of character.<sup>2</sup>

In the passage of the *Protagoras* quoted above<sup>3</sup> Hippias indicates his agreement with the Empedoclean principle of the sympathy between likes: 'for like is akin to like by nature'. Untersteiner<sup>4</sup> ascribes to him on this basis a doctrine of knowledge analogous to that of Empedocles 'for whom sense-perception and knowledge respectively are based on an act of perception or thought in which like deals with like'.<sup>5</sup> Knowledge is therefore an autonomous act in which the *physis* of the individual makes contact with the *physis* of the external world.<sup>6</sup> This process is assisted by Hippias' method of immediate response to questions in which he claimed he had never met his match.<sup>7</sup> It is also assisted by the cultivation of the memory and the pursuit of an all-embracing knowledge.

The man who knows everything will be able to make contact, through the law of attraction of like with like, with all the manifestations of *physis*, in order to know it and to act in a suitable way.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Hipp. Min.* 365 b.

<sup>2</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 291.

<sup>3</sup> 337 d (see p. 184 above).

<sup>4</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 285.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.*

<sup>6</sup> *ib.*

<sup>7</sup> Plato, *Hipp. Min.* 363 d-364 a.

<sup>8</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* pp. 285-6.

Hippias' answer to the perennial problem of the relative importance of nature and nurture is that a good natural disposition is a necessary but not sufficient condition for successful achievement in any field. Further, any particular excellence is in danger of being perverted from good to evil ends, as happened at Corcyra.<sup>1</sup> It was therefore the function of Education to guide the separate powers towards their fulfilment and in the right direction.<sup>2</sup>

Hippias' insistence on a many-sided curriculum embracing all the known subjects was based on his philosophy of nature and his theory of knowledge, but it was destined to exert an influence of incalculable power over subsequent and particularly modern educational practice. His insistence on the unique importance of mathematics as a part of education, and his emphasis on the individuality of man and the power of education to guide his natural development, mark him out as a figure of primary importance in the history of education.

## 6 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE SOPHISTS

Though, as we shall see later, the sophists and their methods were to be subjected to the stern criticism of Plato's dialectic, and although the conventions of later educational literature demanded the inclusion of a criticism of the sophists, they did supply a very definite demand in Athenian education and provided most of the higher instruction in fifth century Athens.

They forged new curricula and developed new fields of study related to the needs of man. Their influence on subsequent teaching and study was enormous. The elaborate prose style, the logical approach to human events, the speeches setting forth either side of problems and arguments, the constant appeal to what is likely or probable such as we find in Thucydides as well as the rhetorical flavour and love of argument which characterizes Euripides owe much to their influence. The use of rhetoric, dialectic and grammar, including as it did the study

<sup>1</sup> Untersteiner, *Sophists* p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* p. 292.

of literary texts, together with mathematics, not merely as ends in themselves but as instruments in the training of the mind, set the pattern for a large proportion of ancient and medieval education. Even Plato, for all his difference in outlook, is not unaffected by their practice in the curriculum of his ideal state.

Part of their success, no doubt, was due to the fact that their teaching did produce practical results, however undesirable some of these results might appear to a Plato or an Anytus; part also to the fact that despite their innovations, they did not break too much with cultural traditions. They recognized themselves as heirs to the poets of antiquity, on whose techniques they modelled their system of teaching public speaking, and they found a place in their systems for a study of these poets, whose works supplied the very life force for the transmission of the Greek cultural tradition. Neither did they show any hostility to the ancient myths which they freely used and adapted to their purposes.

# Theory and Practice of the Great Educators

## II. Socrates

### 1 THE SOCRATIC QUESTION

The name of Socrates occupies a commanding position in the history of Athenian education, but though there are abundant writings which purport to describe his activities and to set forth his views, and though his influence on subsequent educational practice may be traced, we are in the unfortunate position of knowing about him very little that is beyond dispute. For in any reference to his views we encounter at the outset the intricacies of the formidable 'Socratic Question'. It is not proposed to debate this question here, nor to attempt to contribute anything to its solution, but merely to state briefly in a few sentences the view that is assumed in this essay as a basis for the treatment of Socrates and Plato as educators.

The most important source of evidence is the dialogues of Plato, but it is at least a possible view that in them Socrates is purely and simply the mouthpiece of Plato's own philosophy. On the other hand, it has frequently been argued that Plato, in the earlier dialogues at least, is reproducing Socrates' philosophy and only gradually comes to express his own independent views in the later dialogues.

The testimony of Xenophon has met with an equally mixed reception ranging from the view which would assign to him greater historical accuracy than to Plato, to one which regards much of his evidence as dependent on Plato's dialogues themselves where it is not purely fiction.

The view assumed in this discussion is that while both Plato

and Xenophon may frequently reproduce Socratic arguments in their work it is scarcely possible to separate these from their own ideas and bias. Hence we assume that Plato, in all his dialogues, sets out to express ideas which he himself held at the time, but as, when he began to write, he was still strongly under the influence of Socrates, much of his earlier writing would no doubt contain Socrates' philosophy as interpreted by Plato. That is to say, if Socrates' own views are to be found anywhere, it will be in the earlier Platonic dialogues, but even if not original with him they will still be Plato's views too. And the difficulty of separating the purely Platonic from the purely Socratic elements will remain unsolved.

This view also assumes that the dramatic settings of the dialogues are meant to be, in general, historically true and that statements about the various characters are based on fact or what Plato believed to be fact. But if Plato was to express his views in dialogue form at all he had to use some character as his mouthpiece, and that character we assume to be Socrates. But with the other characters such as Protagoras or Prodikos there is less call for falsification, and we assume that, due allowance being made for Platonic bias, they are more or less correctly reported, without asserting that the exact conversations took place precisely as recorded.

All this amounts to saying that we may treat the dialogues as evidence except in the case of the actual views of Socrates. There are difficulties in this position but they are no greater than those of the opposing position which seeks definitely to mark off the Socratic from the Platonic elements.

A partial exception may be made for the *Apology* where we have a definite attempt to defend Socrates' memory. There we may reasonably expect to find a foundation of fact upon which is built Plato's idealization of Socrates' martyrdom. Similarly Xenophon's *Memorabilia* which clearly claims to be historical could yield more evidence than his other work, when due allowance is made for distortion due to Xenophon's prejudices and interests, which also condition the selection of what seemed to him significant facts.



I have not argued any of the above points as the evidence may all be found in such writers as Taylor, Burnet and Field and as it affects wider philosophical questions much more than educational ones. It has been necessary, however, to refer to this difficult topic to justify the use made of the dialogues as evidence in the account given in the previous chapter of the sophists, and to explain the attitude that will be taken to Socrates and Plato.

## 2 SOCRATES AS EDUCATOR

### (i) THE SOCRATIC METHOD

What then can we assert of Socrates as an educator? And this suggests another question – why did Plato employ him as the chief character of his dialogues? No doubt it was partly because Plato began by writing about the same kind of subjects and by expressing the same kind of views as he had taken over from him; and partly because he wished to do honour to his memory. But there is surely another reason – because Plato was carrying on the educational method that Socrates had employed so successfully. If that is so, the most *Socratic* element in the dialogues will be the method of inquiry and the general attitude to education which is characteristic of this method.

The method itself is stated formally in the *Phaedo*:

However, this was the method which I adopted: I first assumed some principle which I judged to be the strongest, and then I affirmed as true whatever seemed to agree with this whether relating to the cause or to anything else; and that which disagreed I regarded as untrue. . . . Inexperienced as I am, and ready to start, as the proverb says, at my own shadow, I cannot afford to give up the sure ground of a principle. And if any one assails you there, you would not mind him, or answer him until you had seen whether the consequences which follow agree with one another or not, and when you are further required to give an explanation of this principle, you would go on to assume a higher principle, and a higher, until you found a resting-place in the best of the higher; but you would not confuse the principle

and consequences in your reasoning, like the Eristics – at least if you wanted to discover real existence.<sup>1</sup>

That is, his method is to start with a postulate and trace its consequences: if these are at variance with one another or with fact, the postulate is disproved. If, after these consequences have been traced, the postulate itself is challenged, it must be deduced from some more general one (*ἀνωθεν*) until one is reached which is acceptable to all. (*ἐκάνον τι*).

This logical method combined with the technique of question and answer formed the basis of Socrates' educational method. In the *Meno* we find it stated by Socrates before he attacks the question whether virtue can be taught. There he indicates that the method to be adopted, in the absence of certain knowledge of what virtue is, is identical with that used by mathematicians. A geometrician can show that certain consequences follow from supposing that a triangle can be inscribed in a given circle, while a different set of consequences follow from supposing that it cannot.<sup>2</sup> Similarly Socrates proposes to inquire what follows from the hypothesis that virtue is akin to knowledge. It is soon agreed that if virtue equals knowledge, then it can be taught. It is still necessary, however, to question the hypothesis itself before the question can be answered.

## (ii) APORIA

Such was the logical basis of Socrates' educational method. But before a question could be investigated satisfactorily it was first of all necessary to induce in the respondent a state of *aporia* or recognition of his own ignorance. This was effected by applying to the ideas already held so confidently by the respondent the Socratic logic, by which he was led to see that they were unsatisfactory and he would then find himself 'at a loss' to propose any theory at all. The refutation brings about

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Phaedo* 100 a–101 e; trans. Jowett. Xenophon in the *Memorabilia* (IV. vi. 13) describes Socrates' method of arguing. In general it is the same as described in Plato; cf. Taylor, *Plato* p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Meno* 87.

a willingness to inquire, which makes possible a more positive attack on the problem, once again by the proposing and testing of hypotheses. This technique is well illustrated by the early sections of the *Meno*.

As usual Socrates begins by feigning complete ignorance. 'I am in the same poverty of ignorance as to this affair,' he says, 'and confess myself to be totally ignorant concerning the essence of virtue.'<sup>1</sup> Meno is encouraged to propose a 'definition' of it which 'breaks down under Socrates' questioning. To show the kind of definition he is seeking Socrates introduces the question – What is figure? – and after one unsatisfactory attempt where he connects it with colour he defines it as the 'bound of a solid', which he considers a better definition than the one Meno induces him, somewhat irrelevantly, to give of colour as 'the flowing off from figures, commensurate with the sight, and by that sense perceived'.<sup>2</sup> The point of these definitions is to provide, through simpler analogies, patterns after which their attempts to define virtue may proceed. 'Patterns of such a definition you have had from me,' he says.<sup>3</sup>

When Meno's further attempts at definition only end in a vicious circle, he complains that Socrates, like the cramp-fish, benumbs his victims. Socrates accepts the comparison only on condition that it is accepted that the cramp-fish is itself numb, that is, it is only because he himself is bewildered that a similar bewilderment is induced in his respondent.

By now Socrates' method has achieved its first objective – of leading Meno to recognize his own ignorance. This is, in Socrates' view, a necessary and important part of the educational process. It is only now, after passing through the salutary process of refutation, that Meno is considered by Socrates as a suitable partner in the joint enterprise of the search for truth.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Meno* 71. The quotations in the present discussion of the *Meno* are from F. Sydenham's translation in the Everyman edition.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* 76.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* 77.

<sup>4</sup> cf. Xenophon, *Mem.* IV. ii. 40 where Euthydemus, 'refuted', returns for positive instruction.

## (iii) RECOLLECTION, AND THE SOLUTION OF A PROBLEM

The next section of the dialogue is of especial interest for our purpose inasmuch as it leads to a demonstration of the application of the Socratic method to a school subject, namely geometry.

To Socrates' claim of ignorance Meno objects by posing the pertinent questions – How can you search for what you do not know, and how can you recognize it when you find it? Socrates endeavours to prove that the search for knowledge is valid by his doctrine of 'recollection' and pre-existence – the theory that the soul has existed before and in its earlier existence possessed knowledge, of which it needs to be 'reminded' in this life. Teaching, though Socrates does not use this term,<sup>1</sup> consists in providing the correct stimuli under which recollection can take place. Intellectual effort and the co-operation of sense experience and observation are still required, but it is 'recollection' which makes learning possible at all.<sup>2</sup>

To illustrate what he means by recollection and to prove its existence, Socrates questions a slave boy who has no geometrical training, but can understand Greek and simple facts such as  $2 \times 2 = 4$ , and without actually telling him anything leads him to understand a geometrical proposition. From this he argues that the boy must have had previous knowledge.

Socrates draws a square with side two feet. The problem, as he explains to the boy, is to find a square double the area of the original one. The boy thinks it is easy and confidently asserts that the side of the required square will be four feet. Socrates extends two sides of the original square to double their length and completes the square. The boy can then readily see that this square is four times the area of the original one, and thus that he is once again in error. But from this second diagram he is able to see that the line required is longer than the side of the original square but less than twice the length, that is, longer than two feet, but less than four. So he takes a guess at

<sup>1</sup> cf. *Meno* 82 a: 'I who say that there is no such thing as teaching, but that all our knowledge is reminiscence' (trans. Sydenham).

<sup>2</sup> Taylor. *Plato* p. 136.

three feet. Socrates demonstrates, once again by a diagram, that a line three feet long will produce a square of nine square feet, not eight.

At this point the boy is bewildered and admits that he does not know how to find the required line. Socrates' method, as he triumphantly points out to Meno, has achieved its preliminary aim. The boy has been brought to a recognition of his own ignorance and is now in a fit state of mind to appreciate a more positive demonstration.

Socrates now constructs three further squares equal to the original square. By drawing the diagonals of each of these squares he enables the boy to see that each of the smaller squares is cut in halves by its diagonal and that the square which they form is equal to twice the original one, and the problem has been solved.

Socrates makes two claims in respect of this demonstration: firstly that he tells the boy nothing and secondly that the process illustrates the theory of reminiscence. The second claim, being a purely philosophical question, need not concern us, except to remark that whether the knowledge is awakened by reminiscence or simply acquired, makes no difference from the educator's point of view. For the educator notes only that after the process of questioning the boy knows something that he did not know before, and the knowledge thus acquired requires a teacher and an educational method.

As to his claim that he tells the boy nothing, though taken literally this is true enough, yet the mere form of his questions in many cases conveys knowledge to the boy, while the actual constructions that he draws contain much information in themselves or at any rate make it easy for the boy to see his mistakes merely by looking at the figures. That is to say, certain pieces of information are transferred from Socrates to the boy through the medium of the diagram. Though Socrates himself claims there is 'no such thing as teaching'<sup>1</sup> yet he does enable the boy to acquire geometrical knowledge. It is clear that in this instance Socrates himself knew the result aimed at and the con-

<sup>1</sup> See note 1, p. 193 above.

struction 'required to 'prove' it. This knowledge, by a skilled technique, is passed on to the boy. Such a transfer of knowledge surely merits the title 'teaching'.

From this demonstration we may summarize the Socratic method thus:

1. Reference to or assumption of certain facts as a basis for discussion, e.g. the boy knows what a square is and that  $2 \times 2 = 4$ .
2. The inducement of a state of *aporia* or willingness to inquire with an open mind. This is effected by the criticism of the boy's hypotheses and the demonstration of their falsity by reference to the diagram.
3. A more positive attack upon the problem which consists in inviting the boy to observe certain ratios and equalities which Socrates, with full knowledge of them himself, draws.

When applied to abstract questions such as the discussion of virtue the general principles are the same – the appeal to some agreed knowledge, the search for and testing of hypotheses, assisted by the provision of pattern definitions which take the place of direct observation in concrete discussions, all of which tends to the inducement of *aporia*; a second more positive attack upon the problem once again employing the same technique as in the first section of the method.

It is clear that the Socratic method lays stress upon the process of investigation rather than upon the acquisition of knowledge; its educational advantage consists in the development in the pupil of a critical attitude of mind and the ability to view a question stripped of irrelevancies and false deductions. It is particularly suited to the kind of subjects that Socrates was fond of discussing, namely moral questions and the definitions of abstract notions such as goodness, piety and the like. It is successful in leading a respondent to see the inconsistencies in his system of conventional beliefs and in the ready-made social morality which the ordinary decent Athenian so unquestioningly adopted. Its ultimate aim is to attain, by joint effort

with a more mature mind, to a knowledge of the 'good', which, since it alone is not an 'art of opposites', will inevitably lead to right action.<sup>1</sup> Intellectual as the method is, it is nevertheless directed towards morality, for the knowledge that it seeks is sought for its moral effect on action, not for utilitarian ends.

It can be applied to the teaching of mathematics, as in the *Meno*, or of science, but when it is so applied, it is the training in method that is stressed rather than the acquisition of a knowledge of geometrical or scientific fact. Research workers in their quest for new knowledge, whatever their philosophical standpoint may be, make much use of this method, and on practically any view of education it would have its place for that reason. It is interesting to note at this point that the technique involved in the Socratic method may be justified on quite different philosophical foundations, as is the case with many of the accepted educational methods. But at any rate from the point of view of a teacher who believes that mastery of already discovered subject matter is educationally important, the Socratic method is pedagogically uneconomical. For if the student has to follow, in his learning of facts that are new to him but well known to his teacher, the same laborious procedure that the original discoverer took, then his progress will be slow indeed. He would probably take so long to catch up with existing knowledge that he would have no time to apply the method to new discoveries in his field. Socrates of course makes no claim to be a teacher in this orthodox sense.

The method, again, is unsuitable for the teaching of such subjects as rhetoric, which by its very nature is always a matter of exposition and persuasion, and of literature. Even Socrates himself, in the literary discussion of the *Protagoras*,<sup>2</sup> is represented as abandoning the question and answer technique for the sophistic method of exposition. Xenophon implies that a direct exposition was, in fact, frequently given by Socrates to those who had successfully come through the ordeal of cross-examination:

cf. Taylor, *Plato* p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Protag.* 339 seq.

When Socrates saw that he was thus disposed, he no longer puzzled him with questions, but explained to him, in the simplest and clearest manner, what he thought he ought to know, and what it would be best for him to study.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible that the very unsuitableness of rhetoric and literature for dialectical treatment is one reason for their almost complete exclusion from the educational curriculum of Plato's *Republic*.

We may then safely argue from Socrates' method that he did not subscribe to the usual 'transmission' theory of education, which had been implied in the whole educational tradition from Homer to the sophists, and which had used as its instruments the poetry and mythology of the preceding generations. In this respect at least Socrates' attitude represents an educational revolution of the first magnitude.

In his view of education, however, as an affair of innate gifts to be developed by a teacher, which is implied by his method and supported by the theory of reminiscence, he shows himself a strong reactionary and at one with the old aristocratic attitude of a Pindar or a Theognis.

On the other hand in his insistence on the indispensable educational value of personal 'association' between teacher and pupil he is in line with practically all Greek educational thought. This attitude is presupposed by the question and answer technique, which would be unthinkable with large groups. It is further emphasized in the *Alcibiades* of Aischines,<sup>2</sup> where he is depicted as specifically stressing the value of association, and in the *Apology* of Plato his accusers show the educational importance which they attach to it by the fact that they regarded the association of Socrates with his pupils as so harmful to the young.

Xenophon, too, in his *Memorabilia*,<sup>3</sup> tells how Euthydemus never left his side except for urgent necessities, thinking that

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.* IV. ii. 40; trans. Watson (Everyman's Library).

<sup>2</sup> See Field, *Plato* p. 149, for a translation and discussion of this passage.

<sup>3</sup> IV. ii. 40.



he could only become a worthy character by associating with Socrates. It is evident that both Socrates and his pupils realized the value of association for moral as well as intellectual improvement.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The above account of Socrates' method is concerned with its *educational* implications. For a criticism of its logical defects see G. Vlastos in his introduction to Plato's *Protagoras* (B. Jowett's translation (Liberal Arts Press)); and for a discussion of its weakness as a method of considering all sides of a question see Havelock, E. A., *Liberal Temper in Gk Politics* p. 209; see also p. 164 above. cf. also Anderson, J., *Socrates as an Educator*.

# Theory and Practice of the Great Educators

## III. Plato

### 1 THE AIM OF EDUCATION

With Plato the goal of the educational process is the production of citizens able to play their part in the life of the civic community. The subject matter and the methods of education must therefore be calculated to realize this severely practical ideal. A theory of education which is not relevant to a theory of society as a whole can serve little purpose. That is why Plato has no discourse 'On Education'. In the two chief works where the topic is treated education figures with great prominence but in each case is treated as the means whereby the customs and traditions of the imaginary society may be inculcated and maintained. If a certain type of state is considered desirable, then a certain, corresponding, type of character will be necessary in the citizens, and this will be produced by a certain type of education.<sup>1</sup> The Ideal State of the *Republic* depends upon the educational scheme sketched in it, while the less ideal but more practical State of the *Laws* will be suited by the somewhat different scheme set out in that work.

In both these treatises Plato is attempting to sketch a scheme whereby the individual may live the fullest life in the service of his city. Thus formal education is to be directed towards the maintenance of the city's best traditions, while at the same time the city's institutions are so devised as to make the state itself one huge educational instrument. This view of the state was

<sup>1</sup> cf. Taylor, *Plato* p. 125 referring to *Gorg.* 514 a.

common in Greek thought. It is represented sympathetically as the view of Protagoras in the dialogue of that name; it is more or less at the back of Pericles' mind in his famous funeral speech; it is the justification of Greek dramatic and other festivals. What Plato did was to take this conception and develop it to its logical conclusion<sup>1</sup> – to shape the state so as best to contribute to the individual's welfare and at the same time to mould the citizen in such a way as to fit him for the enjoyment of the benefits of the ideal state. Hence in a wider sense education was provided by mere membership of a community, by participation in its activities, and by obedience to its laws<sup>2</sup> – in the narrower sense it consisted of deliberate training aimed at the development of civic virtue.

As it takes a lifetime of study and effort to attain to true virtue based upon philosophical insight, the ordinary citizen must rest content with 'true and assured beliefs about good and right, bad and wrong'<sup>3</sup> which it is the function of the educator to provide. He must act in accordance with certain well defined standards of conduct which he will not understand but accept from those in authority. Hence the city will require a small élite class of men who do understand these standards philosophically; whose intellectual and moral training will be such that they can govern the city wisely and, backed by a sure knowledge of principles, supervise the education of the majority. For both classes education has a moral content, the virtue of the citizen depending on training imposed by the authorities, that of the élite on genuine insight into and knowledge of moral values.

We must bear in mind these two levels of virtue necessitated by the practical demands of a city-state organization as we turn to consider the specific means Plato adopts for the education of his citizens.

## 2 CAN VIRTUE BE TAUGHT?

A cardinal question in many of the dialogues is whether virtue can be taught. Plato does not assert in so many words that

<sup>1</sup> cf. Field, *Plato* pp. 92 and 115.

<sup>2</sup> *Repub.* 590 c.

<sup>3</sup> Taylor, *Plato* p. 405, referring to the *Politicus*.

virtue can be taught in this way or in that, but it is clear that if it can be taught it is somehow connected with knowledge.<sup>1</sup> The curriculum of the *Republic* provides some answer to the question. The virtuous citizen will be produced by experience<sup>2</sup> in acquiring certain selected parts of knowledge. Plato does not baldly make the equation virtue = knowledge, but it is clear from the tentative suggestions of the *Meno*<sup>3</sup> and the *Theaetetus*<sup>3</sup> that the acquisition of knowledge involves intellectual effort, not mere passive receipt of instruction, and that it is the effort involved that has educational significance rather than the mere practical utility of the knowledge itself. The process of acquiring knowledge affects the character and leads to virtue.

### 3 THE CURRICULUM

The general principles of curricular construction are similar in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, though the latter because of its more practical nature goes into greater detail on some points. In both there is a primary stage suitable for all citizens followed by higher studies for the select few, who will become Rulers or Nocturnal Councillors. By considering the proposals of the two works taken together it is possible to trace Plato's attitude to the various subjects of study and their place in the curriculum.

### 4 ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

The two main divisions of the primary curriculum are Music and Gymnastic, the former embracing all the subjects of general education. The aim of physical education is the development of a sound body, though it is not without its influence on character. The aim of poetry and music is to provide contact for the growing mind with examples of beauty and nobility

<sup>1</sup> This question is touched upon in the *Meno*.

<sup>2</sup> cf. the discussion of Reminiscence.

<sup>3</sup> cf. the images of the waxen block and the aviary in the *Theaetetus* (193 c and 197 c).

and to develop an appreciation of harmony and rhythm. Through the process of habituation the pupil will come to love nobility and beauty and to hate ugliness.<sup>1</sup> In the early stages this love of beauty is based upon standards imposed from above, and accepted on the level of opinion, not of knowledge. It is precisely because literature and music are to have this specific didactic purpose that Plato directs so much criticism towards existing poetry and music.

### (i) LITERATURE

Plato does not reject literature as a subject of the curriculum. His educational schemes, especially at the primary level, are based upon existing practices, modified, however, and improved, just as his ideal state has its roots in the traditional city-state of the Greek world. Current practice placed great emphasis upon literature as a formative element in education and so does Plato, though the literature he recommends is of a different kind.

At the outset Plato shows that most of the stories in Homer and Hesiod are inconsistent with his basic assumption that God is good, and for this reason must be excluded from the curriculum.<sup>2</sup> The stories that a child hears in earliest childhood become fixed in his mind and it is therefore important 'that the first stories which he hears shall be designed to produce the best possible effect upon his character'.<sup>3</sup> He must therefore be protected against stories of gods ill-treating their parents, or quarrelling amongst themselves; of gods transforming themselves<sup>4</sup> (the divine state being perfect must be immune from change) or practising deceit. Such passages must be expurgated from the poets before their works can be used. Plato does not criticize these accounts as poetry, but as educational material.

Similarly stories about heroes must be purified if they represent heroes as acting unworthily. Scenes where heroes give way to wailing and lamenting,<sup>5</sup> or where Achilles reproaches Apollo

<sup>1</sup> *Repub.* 401 d-e.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* 377.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* 378 seq.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* 378 d-e; trans. Cornford.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* 387 d.

or drags<sup>1</sup> Hector round the tomb of Patroklos, cannot be admitted.<sup>2</sup> Likewise stories about human conduct must be made to conform to the standard of justice which is the subject of the *Republic*.<sup>3</sup>

The *Laws* provide for a similar rigid censorship of stories intended for the young.<sup>4</sup> The poets must work within the limits of the censorship and play their part in the compilation of an anthology for schools. Boys must learn only the songs that tend to develop manliness, and girls those adapted to develop purity and sedateness.<sup>5</sup>

Plato is not deaf to the charm of traditional poetry, but he makes it clear that much of it does not measure up to the standards of his ideal community. His pupils are not to have any contact with such unworthy actions or emotions, as occur so frequently in the works of Homer and other poets. Dramatic poetry is particularly open to censure inasmuch as the reciter or listener tends to assimilate himself to the emotions or actions represented, and this tends to leave a mark on his character.

They are not to do anything mean or dishonourable; no more should they be practised in representing such behaviour, for fear of becoming infected with the reality.<sup>6</sup>

While it is necessary to control emotion through reason, dramatic poetry tends to arouse the emotions and give free rein to them. It is in the nature of things that the poet should find more scope for representation and win more popular applause in treating the 'fretful type' rather than the steadfast type.<sup>7</sup>

The general objection to poetry is bound up with the question of specialization – if the guardians are to specialize in their functions of government and defence, then their characters must be specialized toward this end and they should have practice only in impersonating 'the appropriate types of character, men who are brave, religious, self-controlled, generous'.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ib. 391 a-b.

<sup>2</sup> ib. 392 b.

<sup>4</sup> ib. 802 e.

<sup>6</sup> ib. 605 a.

<sup>3</sup> *Laws* 801 d-802 d; cf. Taylor, *Plato* p. 483.

<sup>5</sup> *Repub.* 395 c; trans. Cornford.

<sup>7</sup> ib. 395 c; trans. Cornford.

The manifold types of character represented in poetry can only debase and divert them from the formation of sound habits.

It follows that dramatic poetry is the most 'harmful of all' and that the only type to be admitted is the simple narrative of noble actions. In the higher education of the Guardians there is no room for poetry at all.<sup>1</sup> There is, Plato reminds us, 'a long-standing quarrel between poetry and philosophy'.<sup>2</sup>

For poetry was generally regarded as the chief vehicle of knowledge embracing the authoritative history of the people and their gods and heroes and as containing all the wisdom of the race. Plato wished to supplant it with philosophy, hence he violently attacked the conception of Homer as the educator of Hellas:

If so, Glaucon, when you meet with admirers of Homer who tell you that he has been the educator of Hellas and that on questions of human conduct and culture he deserves to be constantly studied as a guide by whom to regulate your whole life, it is well to give a friendly hearing to such people, as entirely well-meaning according to their lights, and you may acknowledge Homer to be the first and greatest of the tragic poets; but you must be quite sure that we can admit into our commonwealth only the poetry which celebrates the praises of the gods and of good men. If you go further and admit the honeyed muse in epic or in lyric verse, then pleasure and pain will usurp the sovereignty of law and of the principles always recognized by common consent as the best.<sup>3</sup>

Plato refutes the claims of Homer (and the other poets) by asking whether Homer ever helped to win a war or gave laws to a city and concludes that poets have no real knowledge of their subjects.<sup>4</sup> Rather than being a guide to conduct and religion Homer is even accused of impiety.<sup>5</sup>

Nor was poetry, in Plato's view, written with any moral aim, but merely to please; it was a form of rhetoric<sup>6</sup> or the effective

<sup>1</sup> cf. Lodge, *Plato's theory of Educ.* p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> *Repub.* 607 b; trans. Cornford.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* 606 e-607 a; trans. Cornford.

<sup>4</sup> cf. Plato, *Ion* 541 seq.; *Repub.* 598 seq.; *ib.* 404 b-c.

<sup>5</sup> *Repub.* 391 a.

<sup>6</sup> Taylor, *Plato* p. 122.

use of language, designed to humour the public. Furthermore, poets are not *σοφοί*, masters of an art, but are possessed by inspiration,<sup>1</sup> unable to explain what they themselves mean,<sup>2</sup> composing in a sort of divine frenzy.<sup>3</sup> Such an attitude can hardly be expected to yield truth. Sometimes they do hit upon the truth by accident, and the censors may select for use those works of theirs which happen to be true. What Plato requires for his citizens are not poets in the traditional sense, but poets who are genuine craftsmen, able to compose the type of songs required by the state for special occasions,<sup>4</sup> or for educational purposes, working not through unbridled inspiration but through controlled technique, in other words working to order.<sup>5</sup>

Mythology, intimately connected with poetry as it is, is open to the same objections as poetry. Plato recognized the possibility of myths having a beneficial effect upon character:

Whereas we shall allow the poets to represent any examples of self-control and fortitude on the part of famous men, and admit such lines as these:

‘Odysseus smote his breast, chiding his heart:

Endure my heart; far worse thou hast endured’’<sup>6</sup>

and was prepared to accept those parts of traditional mythology which had a similar trend, but on the other hand there were many examples of its evil influence on character<sup>7</sup> and of inconsistencies which could only lead to confusion.<sup>8</sup> Others before Plato – Xenophanes for example – had criticized the inconsistency of myth and its inadequacy for moral teaching. The conservative Pindar had been worried on this very point, but whereas he had been prepared to make the effort to bring the myths into harmony with the ideals of society by deliberate tampering with accepted versions, Plato refused to compromise,

<sup>1</sup> Taylor, *Plato* p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> *Apol.* 22 b; *Meno* 99 c; Taylor, *Plato* p. 162; Lodge, *Plato's theory of Educ.* p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> Taylor, *Plato* p. 306, Plato, *Ion* 534.

<sup>4</sup> Lodge, *Plato's theory of Educ.* p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> *Repub.* 390 d; trans. Cornford.

<sup>7</sup> *ib.* 377 c; 388.

<sup>8</sup> *ib.* 522 d (Palamedes inventing number); 408 c (Asclepius, though the son of a god, being avaricious).



and though he accepts some myths which happen, almost by accident, to accord with his high standards, he proposes to eliminate the rest completely, and in their place to substitute others of his own invention, such as the myth of the metals.<sup>1</sup>

It will be noted that he does not reject myth and fiction as such – the whole tradition of Greek Education was based upon it and Plato seeks not to supplant, but to improve upon tradition – but he does insist upon a rigid censorship over them. That is to say, he does not fail to recognize the universality of mythic appeal and is ready to turn it to account. For he believes that ‘myths are to convey important truths in a form that will appeal to the imagination of young or untrained minds’.<sup>2</sup> Of such a nature is the myth of the metals. The doctrine of compensation is revealed in the myth of the judgement of Gorgias,<sup>3</sup> and of responsibility of humans for their own actions in the myth of Er.<sup>4</sup> These are but several examples of Plato’s own use of myth for educational purposes on a grand scale. But he also frequently employs mythology on a smaller scale to emphasize a point or to draw a parallel. For example, when referring to the three parts of the soul he stresses his point by reference to the authority of Homer,<sup>5</sup> and in his discussion of the right use of medicine he alludes to the practice of Asclepius.<sup>6</sup> He quotes the example of Eurypylus to illustrate the simpler medical treatment of those times,<sup>7</sup> and cites Homer as an authority on diet.<sup>8</sup> The fact that myth was the common educational background and part of the idiom of thought and expression of the Greeks made it natural for any author to draw upon its treasures to support his theories, and no doubt Plato envisages his citizens as being provided with a similar common background of mythology, purified, however, and carefully selected. His attack on myth is not on myth as such, but on the unworthy uses to which it had been put.

<sup>1</sup> *Repub.* 415.

<sup>2</sup> Cornford, *Republic of Plato* p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *Gorg.* 525 d.

<sup>4</sup> *Repub.* 614 seq.; Cornford, *Republic of Plato* pp. 340–4.

<sup>5</sup> *Repub.* 441 b.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* 407 d.

<sup>7</sup> *ib.* 405 e.

<sup>8</sup> *ib.* 404 b.